

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

SECONDARY SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS  
OTHER THAN THE G.C.E.

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*Report of a Committee  
Appointed by the Secondary School Examinations Council  
in July 1958*



LONDON  
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE  
1960

*Membership of the Committee*  
*with position held at the time of appointment*

- Mr. R. Beloe, C.B.E., M.A. (*Chairman*),  
Chief Education Officer, Surrey.
- Dr. W. P. Alexander, L.H.D., Ph.D., Ed.B., M.A., B.Sc.,  
F.B.Ps.S.,  
General Secretary, Association of Education Committees.
- Mr. E. L. Britton, M.A.,  
Headmaster, County Secondary Mixed School, Warlingham,  
Surrey.
- Mr. C. E. Dodgson, M.A.,\*  
Headmaster, Foxford County Secondary (Comprehensive)  
School, Grange Road, Coventry.
- Miss O. M. Hastings, M.A.,  
Secretary, Association of Assistant Mistresses Incorporated.
- Dr. A. Hay, M.A.,  
Chief Inspector, Education Department, London County  
Council.
- Mr. H. Wyn Jones, M.A., B.Sc.,  
Secretary, Welsh Joint Education Committee.
- Miss G. Wenninger, M.A.,\*  
Headmistress, Violet Markham County Secondary School,  
Chesterfield, Derbyshire.
- |                               |   |  |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Mr. D. A. Routh               | } | <i>Assessors,</i><br><i>Ministry of Education.</i> |
| Mr. J. W. Withrington, H.M.I. |   |  |
| Mr. C. W. Morris, H.M.I.      | } | <i>Joint Secretaries.</i>                          |
| Mr. K. W. Morris              |   |  |

\* Co-opted.

NOTE: The estimated gross cost of the preparation of this Report is £1,368.12.8 of which £910 represents the estimated cost of the printing and publication.

## Foreword

This is a Report by a Committee of the Secondary School Examinations Council which was set up to study the question of examinations other than the G.C.E. in secondary schools. The Secondary School Examinations Council have recommended that I should publish the Report and I am very glad to do so. Mr. Beloe and his Committee have tackled a difficult subject with admirable thoroughness and speed; I warmly commend their Report to all those who are specially concerned with the development of secondary education; and I want to express my own indebtedness to Mr. Beloe and his Committee.

The Secondary School Examinations Council themselves propose to consult the Associations of Teachers and Local Authorities. I hope that any other organisations or individuals who wish to offer comments will do so and send them to the Secretary of the Secondary School Examinations Council. Before reaching final conclusions I shall want to study carefully such further advice as the Secondary School Examinations Council themselves may wish to offer in the light of public discussion and of comments received.

DAVID ECCLES

July, 1960.

*Letter from the Chairman of the Secondary School Examinations Council  
to the Minister of Education*

21 July, 1960.

My dear Minister,

I have the honour to present a Report on secondary school examinations other than the G.C.E. submitted by a Committee of the Secondary School Examinations Council set up to inquire into this matter in July, 1958, under the chairmanship of Mr. R. Beloe, formerly Chief Education Officer for Surrey.

As you may recollect, I wrote to your predecessor on 3rd April, 1958, indicating my Council's desire to set up such a Committee. In his reply of 17th June, 1958, Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd said that he would not wish to stand in their way, but that as the Central Advisory Councils for Education (England and Wales) had already been asked to give this problem special attention, he hoped that they would find means of complementing rather than duplicating the work of those Councils. This consideration has been much in the minds of the Committee in preparing their Report, and as they state in their introduction they were assisted during the earlier part of their deliberations by an observer from the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) who was invited to serve by agreement with Sir Geoffrey Crowther.

As you will see, the Committee's findings and recommendations are unanimous.

The Report was considered by the full Council at their meeting of 13th July, 1960. The Council warmly welcomed the Report and were much impressed by the thoroughness and the speed with which the Committee had tackled their task. I am sure they would wish me to express to you their great indebtedness to Mr. Beloe and his Committee.

As you will see from Mr. Beloe's covering letter of 4th July, his Committee believe that there would be much to be gained from a public discussion of the issues involved before final conclusions are reached. My Council share this view and believe that this Report would form a suitable basis for such public discussion. They therefore propose themselves to send the Report to the Teachers' and Local Authority Associations and other organisations specially concerned, and to invite their comments. At the same time they hope that you will arrange to publish the Report on their behalf so that other bodies and individuals who wish to do so may have the opportunity of sending their comments to the Council.

In asking you to publish the Report the Council would not wish to be taken as necessarily endorsing all its findings and recommendations. They would like, as Mr. Beloe has himself suggested in his letter, to reserve the right to consider particular sections and recommendations of the Report more fully at a later stage, in the light of comments received from the Associations and from members of the public. In due course, when these have been received and fully considered by the Council with the help of their Committee, the Council hope to put to you their definitive conclusions and recommendations on the action to be taken.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN LOCKWOOD

The Right Hon. Sir David Eccles, K.C.V.O., M.P.,  
Minister of Education.

*Letter from the Chairman of the Committee  
to the Chairman of the Secondary School Examinations Council*

4th July, 1960.

My dear Lockwood,

The Secondary School Examinations Council appointed us in July 1958 as a Committee with the terms of reference set out at the beginning of our Report. We first met as a Committee on 30th September, 1958. As our study has progressed we have become increasingly aware of the urgency as well as of the complexity of the problems confronting us. We have, therefore, pressed ahead with all possible speed to present our Report. We have also thought it desirable to report at some length our findings on the current examination pattern and its origins, in order to present more clearly the complex issues involved in any attempt to make constructive proposals for the future.

As stated in the Introduction, our Report is unanimous. Moreover, we would wish our review of the problems, and the conclusions and recommendations which we have reached in consequence, to be regarded as an interconnected whole, much of whose value would be lost if major changes were made in the balance of the scheme proposed.

In pursuing our inquiries we have done our best to keep in touch with the views of teachers, local education authorities and others particularly concerned in this field. We nevertheless think it likely that the Council will themselves wish before proceeding further to have formal consultations with the associations concerned, and we would welcome such a step.

We also believe that there would be much to be gained from a wider public discussion of the issues involved before final decisions are made; and we would therefore hope that, if the Council judged the Report to be generally suitable for this purpose, they would consider advising the Minister to publish it in its present form as a basis for such wider discussion, and to invite those who wish to do so to send their views and comments to the Council.

In that case the Council would no doubt also consider whether or not they wished to give any expression of general sympathy and agreement with the Report at this stage. We would expect and assume that in any event the Council and the individual members of it would reserve the right freely to express their views on particular sections of the Report at a later stage, when the comments of the associations have been reviewed and the results of a wider public discussion are also available.

Yours sincerely,

ROBERT BELOE

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# Terms of Reference, Proceedings and Membership of Committee

## *Terms of reference*

1. On 2nd July, 1958, the Secondary School Examinations Council appointed a committee with the following terms of reference:

"To review current arrangements for the examination of secondary school pupils other than by the General Certificate of Education examination, to consider what developments are desirable, and to advise the Council whether, and if so, what, examinations should be encouraged or introduced, and at what ages and levels."

## *Proceedings and Membership of Committee*

2. The Committee first met on 30th September, 1958, and have held 24 meetings. They were empowered to co-opt two additional members, and co-opted two serving teachers, a headmaster of a comprehensive school and a headmistress of a secondary school. An observer from the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) was invited to attend meetings of the Committee until that Council produced its report '15 to 18.' Mr. T. F. Gilbert, Headmaster of North Modern Boys' School, Ashford (Kent), sat with the Committee in that capacity until December, 1959. The Committee are much indebted to him for his help and advice, and to the Chairman of the Central Advisory Council for allowing him to serve.

## *Evidence*

3. We had available to us the evidence submitted by the teachers and local authority associations and others concerned in response to the Minister's Circular 289, of July, 1955. We have received oral and written evidence from representatives of various schools of thought amongst teachers, local education authorities, technical college principals and employers, and from a number of Examining Bodies which conduct examinations other than for the General Certificate of Education. In addition we have carefully studied material available in the Press and in other publications on the subject.
4. We also sent questionnaires to chief education officers of all local education authorities in England and Wales, and to most of the Examining Bodies concerned; and we made an inquiry of a representative sample of secondary schools of all types about the examinations taken by their pupils in 1957 and 1958. We are greatly indebted to all who replied to our detailed questioning for their prompt and helpful replies, which greatly eased our task.
5. We wish to record our very warm gratitude to the Joint Secretaries of the Secondary School Examinations Council, Mr. K. W. Morris and Mr. C. W. Morris, H.M.I., who have acted as our Secretaries, to our Committee Clerk, Miss M. A. Giles, and to the others who have assisted. The arrangements, and the preparation of all the papers, for our twenty-four meetings in less than two years, added to the regular meetings of the Council and its committees, have placed upon them a great deal of extra work which they have most cheerfully and effectively carried out.

We wish to record our equally warm gratitude to our assessors, Mr. D. A. Routh and Mr. J. W. Withrington, H.M.I., for the skill and wisdom which



they have placed at our disposal. They have been of very great help to us throughout our deliberations.

6. We now submit our report, which is unanimous.

## CHAPTER I.

### Historical Perspective

#### *From patronage to public examination*

7. In order to put our problems, and the origin of our Committee, in perspective, we start by sketching briefly the historical background out of which the modern concept of the written public examination has emerged in this country. It is said that in China written examinations to select candidates for the public service were used as far back as the beginning of our Christian era. In this country they were scarcely used before the 19th century; and it was only in the 1850's that the principles of patronage, and of the religious test, began to yield place widely to the idea of merit, as shown in a public written examination, for admission to the universities or appointment to public services. The 1850's saw the beginning of the movement to abolish the religious tests for admission to degrees at Oxford and Cambridge. The same decade saw the beginnings of many tests of a new kind: competitive examinations conducted by a Central Board for admission to the Home and Indian Civil Service, competitive examinations for the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and the throwing open of London University examinations to all men in 1858. (Women were not admitted until 1878.)

8. These developments had their effects on the schools. Abolition of religious tests led at Cambridge, for instance, to the removal of restrictions in electing scholars of colleges; and the scholarships thus thrown open for competition provided a strong stimulus for some of the boys' public and grammar schools. Similarly, the curriculum of many of the leading boys' schools began to be influenced by the requirements of the Civil Service and Army examinations and the London Matriculation examinations. In 1861 there was appointed the Clarendon Commission, one of whose recommendations resulted in public school scholarships being put on a competitive basis.

9. It is salutary to recall something of the spirit of the old order which prevailed before these radical ideas had produced their effects. It is aptly conveyed in some remarks which were made in January 1911, towards the end of his life, by the first Earl of Cromer, when introducing a lecturer to the Royal Society of Arts.\* "Some 56 years ago, being then a boy of 14," he told his audience,

I was admitted into the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, with a view to eventually becoming an officer in the Artillery or Engineers. At that time there was a sort of sham entrance-examination, but I never heard of any boy who had been nominated by the Master-General of the Ordnance being rejected. Lord Hardinge, the grandfather of the present Viceroy of India,

\* quoted in P. J. HARTOG. *Examinations*. (Constable, 1918.)

Mr. (later Sir Philip) Hartog was himself the lecturer in question.



who was a friend of my family, gave me my nomination. On presenting myself at Woolwich for medical examination, I was very rightly rejected for short sight. I returned to London and told my mother, who was my only surviving parent. She acted with promptitude. She instantly rang the bell, ordered her carriage, and went to the Horse Guards to see Lord Raglan, who had succeeded to Lord Hardinge's place, and who was another friend of my family. The result was that next day I returned to Woolwich with a letter addressed by Lord Raglan to the medical officer, asking him to "reconsider the matter." I was, of course, admitted. Exactly the same thing happened at the same time to another lad who was at first rejected on the ground that he had a serious impediment in his speech, but whose case was subsequently, under pressure, "reconsidered." This sort of thing could not happen now. The practical working of the system may, however, best be illustrated by an anecdote which is related of Lord Melbourne. A friend of his who occupied a high position and who disposed of a good deal of patronage, said to him "I do not in the least mind confessing that if I had to deal with two candidates, one of whom was the son of a friend or relation of mine, and the other a stranger, I should, *ceteris paribus*, give the appointment to the son of my friend or relation." To which Lord Melbourne dryly replied, "So should I, but *ceteris paribus* be d—d."

#### *The new outlook and the growth of public examinations*

10. By contrast, the new outlook put the emphasis on merit and efficiency. Competitive examinations and the abolition of religious tests were considered to be the guarantee that place and opportunity would go to those whose industry and capacity for acquiring and expressing knowledge produced the best examination results. As John Morley said in his *Life of Gladstone* "The lazy doctrine that men are much of a muchness gave way to a higher respect for merit and to more effectual standards of competency". Gladstone himself, in 1854, characteristically summed up the new outlook in writing to Lord John Russell about the Civil Service question:

I speak with diffidence; but remembering that at the revolution (of 1689) we passed over from prerogative to patronage and that since the revolution we have also passed from bribery to influence, I cannot think the process is to end here . . . I cherish the hope that the day is now near at hand, or actually come, when in pursuit not of visionary notions but of a great and practical and economical improvement we may safely give yet one more new and striking sign of rational confidence in the intelligence and character of the people.\*

11. At this time the middle classes were increasing fast, and the endowed and private schools increased in size and number to provide for them. Examinations came into being to meet the needs of these schools for standards. First came the College of Preceptors, whose examination was set up in the early 1850's. This was replaced at the instance of the schools by the Local Examinations of Oxford and of Cambridge Universities which were started in 1858. The University of Durham first instituted examinations of this kind in the same year. The London Matriculation Examination has already been mentioned. In its origin an examination for entrance to London University, unrelated to the courses of study in individual schools, it came in practice to be used as a leaving examination by many pupils who did not intend to go on to University.

12. Already in 1868 the Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission was drawing attention to the dangers for the schools of an uncontrolled proliferation of

\* Quoted in Morley's *Life of Gladstone*. Appendix. Vol. II.

examinations. "When a school has to prepare boys for several different examinations," they wrote, "an adaptation of the school course to suit them becomes impossible. . . . It is easy if the examinations are very stringent to push . . . divergence so far as to make effective organisation of the school impossible." The remedy proposed by the Commission was the establishment of a statutory council for examinations in secondary schools. But this was successfully opposed at that time by the headmasters of public schools, who regarded the idea as a dangerous form of state intervention. This was the origin of the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board, which came into being in 1873 (girls were admitted in 1879). The Central Welsh Board came into being in 1896 (see Chapter VI below).

13. This period also saw the beginnings of examinations for the working man who had left or who had not been to school. In 1847 the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes started its examinations. In 1856 the Royal Society of Arts started examinations to encourage those attending Mechanics' Institutes to undertake serious study instead of merely recreational pursuits. In 1873 the same society instituted examinations in technological subjects, and these were transferred in 1879 to the City and Guilds of London Institute. In 1870 the London Chamber of Commerce began courses in commercial education and instituted examinations in 1890. Pitmans' College have conducted commercial examinations since 1898, and just before, in 1895, the Union of Educational Institutions was established as an examining body for post-school education. We shall find most of these, and some other bodies, appearing as secondary school examining bodies in the mid-20th century.

14. In the meantime, we return to the "secondary schools" (the "grammar" schools as we should now describe them). When the Bryce Commission made their investigations shortly before the turn of the century they found in their survey of seven counties that 4% of all boys and girls aged 14 or 15 were in school, and 1% of those aged 16 and 17.\* But the numbers and sizes of secondary schools were to be greatly increased by the provisions of the Education Act of 1902, which enabled the new local education authorities to aid and to establish them. About this time too there were further important additions to the number of examining bodies. By 1903 the London University Extension Board and the Northern Universities Joint Matriculation Board had joined the Local Examination Delegacies of Oxford and of Cambridge and the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board. The University of Bristol School Examinations Board started examining in 1911. All these bodies conducted examinations at various levels for differing purposes. Prominent among these was the old "junior certificate," taken at 14 or 15. Each examination had its own list of compulsory subjects and its own peculiarities of syllabus and was usually designed to provide a passport to one university or profession. All these examinations were taken in the "secondary schools."

15. Once again a public commission found it necessary to draw attention to the dangers for the schools of this unco-ordinated growth of examining bodies:

"The existing multiplicity of external examinations," said the Report of the Consultative Committee in 1911, "the claims of which at present so fre-

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\* Quoted in "15 to 18," 1959 Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) paragraph 24.

quently interfere with the best work of the schools, should be reduced by concerted action. All external examinations," it continued, "should be so conducted as to assist and emphasise the principle that every secondary school should provide, for pupils up to an average age of 16, a sound basis of liberal education which . . . would serve as a foundation upon which varieties of further education could be based."

(The views of the 1911 Committee on the effects of examinations on pupils and teachers will be found in Appendix 1.)

### *The School Certificate Examination and the Secondary School Examinations Council*

16. This time the remedies proposed by the Committee were accepted. As a result of the 1911 Report, the Board of Education in 1917 introduced a new examination scheme for secondary schools. In place of the "junior certificate" and the variety of other examinations referred to in paragraph 14 above, only two examinations were recognised; the School Certificate intended for pupils about the age of 16, and a Higher School Certificate for those about two years older. Further, the universities were recognised as the responsible bodies through whom the examinations in secondary schools were normally to be conducted. To ensure the necessary equivalence of standards and to provide machinery for periodic improvements, the Board of Education undertook to perform the functions of a co-ordinating authority; and a body called the Secondary School Examinations Council was set up to advise the Board in this task.

17. The School Certificate examination was designed to test the results of the course of general education which preceded the more specialised course leading to the Higher School Certificate. In order to pass, a candidate had to attain the required standard in three main groups of school subjects, the group and not the individual subject being the unit in respect of which success or failure was determined. Schools normally had to present forms as a whole and not individual pupils, so that the examination determined the pattern of secondary school courses and gave a sense of direction to grammar school education. This may well have been valuable to many schools at a time when the provision was being rapidly extended; though from the outset there was some opposition in the schools to the idea of a "group" examination.

18. As the schools gained experience, it was increasingly found that the system tended to restrict their progress. Pupils and teachers had become unduly concerned with examinations; concentration on examination syllabuses and the requirement that pupils must pass in a group of subjects had restricted the initiative of the teachers; and the artificial division between fifth and sixth form work hindered the development of a unified secondary school course. The Spens Committee, reporting in 1938, recorded that witnesses were almost unanimously of the opinion that "despite all safeguards, the School Certificate examination . . . now dominates the work of the schools, controlling both the framework and the content of the curriculum."

### *The Norwood Report*

19. The War which followed in 1939 prevented any action being taken at once. But in 1943, when the great Education Bill of 1943-1944 was about to come before Parliament, the Norwood Committee of the Secondary School Examinations Council issued a Report which condemned the existing examina-

tion system and recommended radical changes (see Appendix 2). Their preference was for a scheme which would replace the School Certificate examination with an internal examination under the control of teachers; but they recommended that for a transitional period of seven years there should be substituted an external examination conducted by the university examining bodies with strong teacher representation, after which it should become an internal examination conducted by teachers themselves, that it should become a "subject" examination, pupils taking whatever subjects they wished to take, and that it should no longer have a predictive function. To meet the needs of admission to the universities and the professions, a separate examination should be conducted for pupils of 18+, the purpose of which would be to show individual pupils' attainment in their chosen subjects, and not to provide evidence of general education.

### *Effects of the 1944 Education Act*

20. The 1944 Act included provisions which were bound sooner or later to throw up major problems in the field of examinations. For not only did it raise the school leaving age to 15 in 1947, but it also required local education authorities to secure that there should be free secondary education for all and, further, that the education should be suited to the age, ability and aptitude of individual children. In consequence, various kinds of secondary schools have been established, comprehensive, multi-lateral, bi-lateral, modern and other. All these schools, grammar and other, aided or maintained by local education authorities, became freed from fees; and all the children who came into them from then on stayed until they were at least 15. It followed that large numbers, indeed the great majority, of children receiving secondary education were children for whom the grammar school type of course was largely or wholly unsuitable. It is true that the proportion selected to enter the grammar school type of course\* has risen during the past 15 years to about 20% of the age group over the country as a whole. But there remain the 80% who do not qualify for such courses and who complete their education in non-selective schools or streams.

21. Moreover, among these children, as amongst those selected for academic courses, but to a lesser extent, there soon became evident an increasing tendency to stay on beyond the statutory leaving age, and there has been a steady growth in the numbers staying until 16 in non-selective schools and streams to take what have come to be known as extended courses.

22. The examination problem to which these new developments gave rise was essentially this: could an examination devised to meet the needs of the children attending selective academic courses, even in the new form (that is, a subject not a group examination) proposed by the Norwood Report, be regarded as appropriate for the needs of these other pupils, most of them in non-selective schools and streams? If not, what was the alternative? Should these children, with the exception perhaps of a small minority who might aim for the "selective" examination, be denied altogether an external examination in which their abilities and aptitudes could be recorded? Or should another examination be devised, separate from and different from the traditional examination, and more suited to the needs and outlook of these pupils?

\* We refer in what follows to grammar or selective courses or "streams", rather than schools, since a number of schools contain both selective and non-selective "streams".

23. The Norwood Committee's answer, as we have seen, would have been to divorce the examinations to be taken at 16 altogether from those concerned with university entrance, and therefore from the university examining bodies, and to transmute the former into internal teacher-controlled examinations in all types of secondary school. The 1947 Report of the Secondary School Examinations Council (a summary of which is given at Appendix 3) sought to create, in the General Certificate of Education Ordinary level examination (hereinafter referred to as the G.C.E. O level) an examination which would be primarily of use to those completing a five-year course of a selective type. The Council hoped that by fixing a minimum age of 16 (with an intention of raising the minimum to a still higher age at a later date) and by proposing a pass standard equivalent to the old School Certificate Credit, they had devised an examination which would in practice be beyond the reach of any but those in selective courses. They envisaged that the needs of children in other courses would be met by arrangements for systematic internal examinations, perhaps with some degree of external assessment, and possibly also objective tests, accompanied by the extensive use of school reports.

24. In the event, neither of these answers has satisfactorily met the realities of the situation. So far from being discarded as a temporary device, as the Norwood Committee had hoped, the G.C.E. O level examination for 16 year-old pupils\* has grown steadily in influence and prestige, and the numbers taking it, not only from selective schools and streams but from all types of secondary school, and from those who have left school, have continued to rise, as may be seen in Chapter II and in Appendix 5 (which gives figures for the years 1951 to 1959). And there has from the beginning been a demand from the teachers and parents of children in non-selective courses, which has grown rapidly in the past few years, for examinations, whether G.C.E. or other, which would satisfy their aspirations for an external test.

*More recent developments. Circular 289 and its sequel*

25. We are now in a position to recall briefly the latest stages of the discussions on this issue, and to explain the circumstances of our own origin as a Committee. In July 1955, having regard to the dissatisfaction which was being expressed in various quarters about the opportunities available for non-selective pupils, and the demand which was growing in consequence for a new kind of external examination suitable for non-selective schools, the Minister issued Circular 289, setting out his own views as a basis for a general discussion on the part to be played by external examinations in secondary schools. Briefly his policy was that:

(a) the present standard of the General Certificate of Education at both Ordinary and Advanced levels should be maintained;

(b) pupils in all kinds of secondary school who were suited to the examinations for the G.C.E. should be given the opportunity of taking them, not necessarily from their original school;

(c) experiments by groups of schools in organising their own examinations were to be welcomed provided that the schools concerned retained control over their own syllabuses and courses of work;

\* In 1952 the Minister accepted the recommendations of the Secondary School Examinations Council that the Head of a school should have discretion to enter a pupil for the G.C.E. examination below the age of 16 if he certifies that it is desirable on educational grounds to enter him earlier and that he has pursued a course of study with such competence that it is probable he will pass the examination in the subjects for which it is proposed to enter him.

(d) he did not favour the establishment of any new general examinations of national standing for secondary schools, or the widespread use of privately organised external examinations of a general character;

(e) he did not propose to vary the Grant Regulation (now superseded by Regulation 15 of the Schools Regulations, 1959) which required school authorities not to enter any pupil under the age of 16 for an external examination except that for the G.C.E. (and then only on the specific recommendation of the Head); and

(f) closer links between employers and schools were to be encouraged, and the more general use of school records amplified by the confidential recommendation of the Head was desirable.

26. In response to the invitation contained in Circular 289, a substantial number of bodies and individuals submitted comments. As a result of these (which we have considered), the Minister issued a further Circular, 326, on 3rd July, 1957. In short, it upheld most of the views expressed in Circular 289, and encouraged further experiments by groups of schools to develop their own internal examinations, possibly with some degree of external assessment. However, the Minister recognised that, where a technical college drew its students from an exceptionally large number of schools, a special case could be made for an external examination as an instrument of selection. He agreed, therefore, that he would not discourage the use of a regionally organised external examination for that limited purpose, to be taken by pupils who would be 16 or over on 1st September in the year concerned.

27. The Minister also said that he was not prepared to modify his general policy (as expressed in (d) and (e) of paragraph 25 above) without further information. The Secondary School Examinations Council, whose views he had sought, had not at that time felt fully qualified to offer advice on these matters, and he therefore decided to ask the Central Advisory Councils for Education for advice. He invited them to consider the question whether any, and if so, what arrangements should be made for the examination of those secondary school pupils for whom the G.C.E. examination was recognised to be inappropriate, as part of their inquiry into the wider issues of the general provision to be made for the education of boys and girls between the age of 15 and 18. The Central Advisory Council for Education (England) published their report in December, 1959, and their main recommendations on secondary school examinations are summarised in Appendix 4 to our report. We consider them in more detail later.

28. Meanwhile the Secondary School Examinations Council had become increasingly concerned about the rapid growth of external examinations outside the G.C.E. framework. They decided that the matter was now so urgent that they should pursue their own detailed inquiries, and informed the Minister of their desire to appoint a special committee of their own number for this purpose. The Minister raised no objection, but expressed the hope that the results of their inquiries would be made available to him. He also asked that the committee should keep in touch with the work which the Central Advisory Council were doing in this field. Accordingly we were appointed by the Council, on 2nd July, 1958, with the terms of reference set out at the beginning of this Report, and the Central Advisory Council were invited to appoint an observer to join our discussions.

## The Present Pattern of Examinations

*The General Certificate of Education*

29. We now start on the first task set by our terms of reference, namely, "to review current arrangements for the examination of secondary school pupils other than by the G.C.E. examination." We begin by stating some of the salient facts about the G.C.E. examination itself, which is the only external examination at present officially recognised by the Minister as suitable for use in secondary schools. This examination, it must be remembered, came into full use in its present form only in 1951. It is conducted at two main levels, the Ordinary or O, level which is designed to be roughly equivalent to the credit level of the old School Certificate, and the Advanced or A level, which is equivalent to the principal subject level in the old Higher School Certificate, with provision for scholarship papers for the purpose of selecting nominees for state scholarships. The G.C.E. examination contains nothing to correspond to the pass level of the old School Certificate; and although proposals have from time to time been made that the standard of the O level should be lowered to meet the needs of the schools, or that a new level of the examination should be introduced below the O level, no such changes have been made (we have more to say about these two proposals in Chapter IV). There has therefore no longer been available any recognised public examination for the type of pupil who formerly took the School Certificate with the hope of obtaining passes (rather than credits) in the requisite number of subjects.

30. Unlike the old School Certificate examination, the G.C.E. examination, at O as well as A level, was made a "subject" examination. Candidates may take the examination, and obtain certificates, in as few as three or two subjects or even one. This has meant that although the standard of the O level is higher than that of the old School Certificate pass, a number of candidates in the range of ability for which previously the School Certificate was suitable enter for, and may pass, the G.C.E. O level examination in a limited number of subjects. Originally the G.C.E. was conceived as primarily an examination of an academic character for the grammar schools, which would offer a convenient way of securing exemption from university entrance requirements and from the preliminary examinations of many professional bodies. All of the eight original G.C.E. Examining Bodies were either organs of, or closely connected with, universities. This examination has in practice taken its place as the school examination normally taken by the great majority of pupils in the fifth year of a grammar school course.

31. But the very fact that the G.C.E. has come to be regarded, at O level as at A level, as the passport to higher education or professional status, or at least to the better-paid posts, has resulted in the examination at O level attracting a steadily increasing number of entries from institutions other than grammar schools. This tendency may well have been accelerated by the establishment in 1953 of a ninth Examining Body, the Associated Examining Board, which is not a university body, and whose examinations are designed to have a different approach more suited to the needs of technical students. By 1959 about one-third of the candidates entering for O level came from educational establishments other than grammar schools. Many of these were candidates who had already left school and took the examination at an

institution of further education. But the figures also show a marked growth in the numbers taking the examination from non-selective schools and streams. For example, we know that in 1959, about 15,600 candidates from nearly 1,000 secondary modern and all-age schools in England and Wales took the G.C.E. O level (as compared with about 10,500 in the previous year), offering an average of just under four subjects.

32. Yet, striking though these figures are when seen by themselves, it is important to see them in proportion, both to the total numbers in the age-group and to the numbers still at school and therefore able to take a school examination. The following table gives some relevant figures.

		in 1958 (to nearest 1,000)	in 1959 (to nearest 1,000)
1. (a) Total in age-group on 1st January	aged 15	603,000	633,000
(b) " " " " " "	aged 16	535,000	603,000
		(to nearest 100)	
2. (a) Total in maintained schools* on 1st January	aged 15	166,900	185,100
(b) " " " " " "	aged 16	72,300	88,300
3. Total in modern and all-age maintained schools on 1st January	aged 15	33,300	42,700
4. School leavers (during the year) from maintained modern and all-age schools	aged 16 and over	13,400	19,100
5. Total of modern and all-age school candidates for G.C.E. O level**		10,500	15,600
6. Candidates as in 5 above who (a) entered and (b) passed in 4 or more subjects	(a) entered (b) passed†	6,100 2,200	9,000 2,900

From these figures it may be seen that, though a substantial proportion of those remaining after 15 in modern schools were attempting the G.C.E. in some subjects (and there is reason to believe that this proportion has been growing) the number attempting it in a range of four or more subjects was considerably smaller; and the number who achieved their aim was smaller still. We shall have more to say in Chapter IV below about the suitability of the G.C.E. O level examination for this group of pupils.

#### *Growth of other examinations*

33. All the inquiries we have made tended to confirm what would appear to be the natural conclusion indicated by these figures, namely, that the G.C.E. O level examination, although it attracts large and growing numbers, is by and large regarded by teachers and parents as suitable only for a strictly limited proportion of pupils in secondary schools. And there has in consequence become apparent in the period since the G.C.E. examination was introduced, and notably in the last few years, a mounting demand from

\* Excluding special schools, at which children are required to stay till 16.

\*\* It should be noted that a number of pupils from these schools may take the G.C.E. O level after leaving school.

† It is estimated that about 50% of pupils leaving maintained grammar schools have obtained O level passes in 5 or more subjects before leaving.



teachers, parents and pupils alike for examinations of a different kind and less exacting standard. (Here, and in all that follows, we are thinking not of the purely internal examinations set by schools entirely for their own purposes, but of examinations having some degree of "externality".)

34. In response to this demand, there has been a rapid and variegated growth of examinations for pupils of secondary school age. As regards the maintained schools, our inquiries have shown that by 1958 only 11 local education authorities in England and Wales had no maintained schools in their areas entering candidates for external examinations other than the G.C.E. Of 238 secondary schools in England (including 77 selective schools) replying to our inquiry on this point in respect of pupils in a single birth group (i.e., those born in 1942), we found that about 65% entered pupils in that birth group for some external examination in 1957 or 1958. About 46% entered candidates for the G.C.E. examination and 43% for other external examinations. Nearly a quarter of the schools entered candidates for both the G.C.E. and some other examination. At non-selective schools there was a clear preponderance of entries for examinations other than for the G.C.E. In Wales, the proportion of maintained secondary schools entering candidates for external examinations was even greater. Further details are shown in Table 3 of Appendix 6. We have not obtained similar figures for independent schools; but such evidence as we have suggests that some of the non-G.C.E. examinations attract a considerable number of entries from these schools also.

35. These external examinations do not follow any uniform pattern. Some are intended only for pupils in their fifth year, many for pupils in their fourth year, some for even younger pupils. Some are local; others are conducted by large "regional" Examining Unions which in the past have been concerned mainly with examining in the further education field; others again by Bodies with national coverage, or Bodies providing specialist examinations for vocational or professional purposes.

36. The examinations other than G.C.E. now in use in the secondary schools can conveniently be divided into four categories:

(a) *Local examinations*, whether conducted by groups of schools, or by local education authorities or their agents. These are usually, though not always, designed for pupils in their fourth year.

(b) *School examinations conducted by Bodies with regional or national coverage*. These may be either for fifth year or fourth year, or in some cases for even younger pupils. They may be either "group" or "subject" examinations.

(c) *Further education examinations*, i.e., examinations primarily designed for students attending part-time courses in institutions of further education.

(d) *Specialist examinations*, usually conducted by Bodies with national coverage, and limited in subject matter, for some vocational or professional purpose.

In what follows we have something to say about the examinations in each of these categories.

(a) *Local examinations*

37. These have proved a fruitful field for experiment; and the response of

teachers, pupils and parents to the local examinations that have been provided appears to indicate a widespread demand. On inquiry of the 146 local education authorities in England and Wales we were told by some 30 authorities that they had schools conducting examinations which led to some form of certificate, and by a further 35 that they had schools taking examinations with some form of external assessment. Some examinations came into being through the initiative of local groups of teachers; others grew up under the leadership of a local education authority. Some are conducted by the local education authority itself or by divisional executives, others by groups of teachers. Some aim at pupils in the stream immediately below the G.C.E. course, others are designed to be taken in selected subjects by a much wider range of children leaving at 15.

38. We should have liked, if space had allowed, to describe some of these examinations in more detail. We are clear that much valuable work is being done by those responsible for these examinations, and that at their best they have been making an effective contribution in a number of ways to the work of the schools. We have been particularly struck by the readiness with which groups of teachers have devoted their time and energy to devising and carrying out schemes of examinations, and the ingenuity with which experiments have been made, for example, with a view to taking account of pupils' class-work in the examination results. We have also been impressed with the thought and care that a number of individual local education authorities have devoted to working out local schemes; and we believe that a number of these, particularly those which attempt to combine the results of a local examination with assessment of other non-examinable qualities or activities in the awarding of school-leaving certificates, contain valuable ideas which deserve a wider currency.

39. Nevertheless it is clear from what we have seen that these local examinations, though they have been of undeniable value in one phase of educational development, are subject to important limitations, and if used in the wrong way can be open to serious educational objections. Of the objections we shall have more to say in Chapter IV below. Here we wish only to mention what are, from the point of view of teachers, pupils and parents, two obvious limitations on the use of local examinations. The first is that they are local, and the certificates awarded on them are therefore unlikely to have more than local currency. The value of a certificate awarded by a group of schools in, say, a north London borough may be well understood by an employer or a technical college principal in that borough. But it may have little meaning or value to an employer or principal in Manchester or even on the other side of London; and this lack of wider currency detracts from its value as an incentive.

40. Secondly, the great majority of local examinations are designed for pupils in their fourth year of a secondary school course. But with the continuing trend towards voluntary staying on for a fifth year, it seems likely that those from whom the demand for examinations comes, whether parents, pupils, teachers or employers, will more and more look for an examination appropriate to the fifth year pupil. For these practical reasons, and leaving aside for the present their educational merits and demerits, we are clear that these local examinations, while they have met a real need, will in the long run increasingly lose their attraction, and will certainly not provide the answer for

those who ask for a substantial system of external examinations outside the framework of the G.C.E.

(b) *Examinations of Bodies with "regional" and "national" coverage*

41. For these and other reasons teachers and parents have been making increasing use of the examinations of the larger and long-established Bodies, which may be expected to have greater prestige and whose certificates are believed to have wider currency. Our inquiries of local education authorities showed that in 1958 schools in the areas of 94 out of 146 authorities were to a greater or less extent entering pupils for the school examinations of bodies of this kind. We now consider these in more detail.

42. The main London-based Bodies concerned are the College of Preceptors, the Royal Society of Arts and the London Chamber of Commerce; and in this connection, although it has not yet entered the field of school examinations, we should also mention the City and Guilds of London Institute. The Regional Bodies are the East Midland Educational Union (Nottingham), the Northern Counties Technical Examinations Council (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes (Manchester), and the Union of Educational Institutions (Birmingham), which operates mainly in the West Midland, and in South and South-West England.\*

43. As indicated in Chapter I, almost all of these Bodies have a considerable history and have in one way or another made significant contributions to English educational development; and some of them have had long experience of examining work. In the case of the Regional Bodies, this has until recently been almost entirely in the field of further education; some of the London-based Bodies have been active for some time in the field of school examinations.

44. *Of the London-based Bodies:*

(i) *the Royal Society of Arts* has conducted a School Commercial Certificate Examination since 1927, and in the last four years it has extended its range by introducing a School Technical Certificate for both boys and girls, and also a General Certificate Examination. The full certificate of all these is awarded only if passes are achieved in a group of subjects. These examinations have been designed for pupils who have completed a five-year secondary school course.

(ii) *The College of Preceptors* has since the early 1850's conducted a Senior Certificate Examination, also on a group basis, for which in theory there is no minimum age limit, but which has in recent years attracted pupils in their fifth year. In 1953 the College introduced its Certificate Examination, also on a group basis, for which the minimum age limit is 14 on 1st July in the year of the examination, and which is taken by pupils in their fourth year and in some cases even earlier.

(iii) *The London Chamber of Commerce* has since 1890 conducted examinations for both further education students and secondary school pupils. Its elementary examinations on an individual subject basis have attracted candi-

\* There is also a Body known as the Combined Schools Examination Committee which caters entirely for independent schools. These schools also enter candidates in considerable numbers for the examinations of the London-based Bodies mentioned above, but less commonly for those of the Regional Bodies.

dates in their fifth year of secondary education, and its intermediate examinations, also on an individual subject basis, have been taken increasingly by secondary school pupils who have followed an extended course with a commercial bias. The Chamber has also provided at intermediate level an examination on a group basis for a School Certificate of Commercial Education.

(iv) The *City and Guilds of London Institute*, as we have indicated above, has not yet entered the field of examination designed for school pupils, but we have good reason to think that it is anxious to do so in the near future.

45. Of the "regional" *Examining Bodies* outside London:

(v) The *Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes* was the first to provide an examination specifically intended for schools. Its Secondary School Certificate Examination, introduced in 1956, is on an individual subject basis and is intended for pupils aged 16 and over who are in the middle ability ranges, i.e. those below the first 30% but not in the lowest 40% of the age-group.

(vi) The *Union of Educational Institutions* came into the field in 1958 with a School Certificate Examination on a group basis intended for 16-year-old pupils below the first 25% but not in the lowest 50% of the range of ability.

(vii) The *Northern Counties Technical Examinations Council* entered the field in 1959 with the Northern Counties School Certificate Examination, also on a group basis, but intended for fifteen-year-old candidates at the end of a four-year secondary school course.

(viii) The *East Midland Educational Union* has made arrangements to enter the school examining field in 1960 with an examination on a subject basis for sixteen-year-old pupils.

(c) *Further education examinations*

46. As has already been mentioned, the school examinations provided by the larger regional and "national" Bodies are by no means the only external examinations outside the framework of the G.C.E. taken by secondary school pupils. The information given to us by schools, local education authorities and Examining Bodies shows that school pupils are being entered on a considerable scale for examinations which are provided by the Regional Examining Bodies primarily for use by further education institutions. Of the 146 local education authorities, 75 told us that schools in their area were entering pupils for these examinations. On the educational aspects of this practice we shall have more to say later. Here we wish only to draw attention to the fact. There is evidence that, with the increasing provision by the Examining Bodies of examinations specifically designed for schools, the practice of entering school pupils for these further education examinations is beginning to decline.

(d) *Specialist examinations*

47. Mention has also been made of the examinations conducted in a particular subject or group of subjects by Bodies of national standing for some specialist or vocational purpose. Most common are those of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and of the Royal Drawing Society, or those with a vocational purpose conducted by the Pitman Examinations Institute, the National Council for Domestic Subjects, the General Nursing Council, or for the Armed Forces. A more complete list of the examinations concerned will be found in Appendix 7. These examinations raise a number of special prob-

lems of their own; but as they appear to us to have only a minor influence on the curriculum of the schools as a whole we have not attempted a detailed survey of them.

*The growth of external examinations and Examining Bodies*

48. In many ways the most striking and significant fact that has emerged from our survey is the growth, and more especially the rate of growth, in the numbers taking the examinations of the regional and national Bodies in recent years. Some indication of this development is given in Tables 1 and 2 of the statistical tables in Appendix 6. Particularly striking is the evidence of Table 1. This shows that of 150 modern schools in England replying to the inquiry, while 76 or just over 50%, were entering pupils for external examinations by 1958, a further 49 had plans for doing so shortly, bringing the proportion of schools entering pupils for examinations to over 80% of the sample. No doubt much of this increase might be accounted for by schools entering pupils for the G.C.E. But Table 2 makes it clear that since 1956 there has been a rapid growth in the taking of external examinations other than the G.C.E., and there are strong grounds for thinking that this trend will continue.

49. This is confirmed by figures which we have been given by the Examining Bodies themselves for the number of centres in 1958, 1959 and 1960 and number of candidates for their school examinations in 1958 and 1959, and which are as follows:

	Centres			Candidates	
	1958	1959	1960	1958	1959
Royal Society of Arts — —	222	348	472	3,904	6,833
College of Preceptors (Certificate Examination) — —	284	357	497	5,305	8,202
(Senior Certificate Examination) —	24*	40*	64*	196	451
Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes — — — —	106	160	207	1,930	3,467
Union of Educational Institutions —	76	148	256	730	1,618

\*School Centres only

These figures show an overall increase between 1958 and 1959 of 70% in the number of candidates and of over 45% in the number of centres, with a further increase of over 40% in the number of centres between 1959 and 1960.

50. While it is true that this growth coincides with a period when the total numbers in secondary schools have been growing, the increase in the number of examination entries is out of all proportion to the increase in total numbers on roll. Moreover these figures by no means give the whole picture, since they do not take any account of the impact of the new examinations provided by the Northern Counties Technical Examinations Council and the East Midland Educational Union, which have only recently been introduced.

51. Another fact to which we must draw attention is that these increases have occurred in face of the Minister's objections, explicitly stated in Circular 289, and only to a very limited extent modified in Circular 326, to the widespread use of external examinations of this kind, and in spite of the difficulties put in the way of pupils wishing to enter for them by the Schools Grant Regulations (since 1959, by the Schools Regulations). And here it may be as well to explain what has been the effect in practice of these regulations. Regulation 15 of the Schools Regulations, 1959, which superseded the similar provisions of Regula-

tion 3 of the Schools Grant Amending Regulations No. 3, 1952, lays down that "a pupil shall not be entered for any external examination other than the G.C.E. unless he will have attained the age of 16 on or before 1st September in the year in which the examination is held." In other words, pupils aged 16 and over might, and may, be entered by their schools; and in these cases the examination fees should be paid by the local education authority, as part of the cost of providing education in the school.

52. What of those examinations other than the G.C.E. which are undoubtedly external, and for which, so far as the Examining Bodies' own regulations are concerned, pupils may be entered below the age of 16? How does it come about, in view of the Minister's policy and Regulations, that pupils from maintained schools are entered for these at all? Still more, that the numbers of entries are rising rapidly? The position as we understand it is that, while the Regulations clearly preclude the *school* from entering under-age pupils for these examinations, the Minister has no power to prohibit pupils from being entered privately by their parents, whether or not they are still in attendance at school. But pupils entered in these circumstances are regarded as having no claim to have the fee paid from public funds. In effect what has happened, on an increasing scale, has been that parents have, at their own expense, with or without encouragement from the teachers and from the Examining Bodies, been acting in a manner contrary to the spirit if not to the letter of the Minister's policy. Without wishing in any way to pass judgement on any of the parties to this state of affairs, we feel bound to urge that it is a wholly unsatisfactory one.

*Some comments on the existing examinations*

53. What has been said about the growing use of these examinations in the schools made it all the more important, in our view, that we should attempt some assessment of their qualities and defects as examinations. This we have done in respect of five of the examinations provided mainly for secondary school pupils, with the help of the Council's expert advisers on individual subjects. To these we wish to express our indebtedness, as also to the Examining Bodies themselves, who have readily provided us where possible with information about their work and also with syllabuses, examination papers, scripts, and explanations of marking arrangements.

54. We preface our comments with three general observations. First, we recognise the special difficulties of examining at this level. In particular we reckon it is more difficult to contrive an examination at this level that will serve its purpose without harmful side-effects on the schools than at higher levels such as those of the G.C.E. O or A level examinations. Secondly, we know that the Examining Bodies whose work we have been studying are in most cases Bodies with considerable histories, who have made significant contributions to educational development in other spheres, and have had much experience of conducting examinations, though not all in the secondary school field. Thirdly, we are aware that much of the work we have been studying is new and experimental, attempting to meet new demands in a changing situation, and is thus bound to be imperfect; and we wish to pay tribute to the energy and ingenuity which the Bodies have in many cases displayed in attempting to meet these demands.

55. Our study of these examinations as well as other evidence we have received leads us to believe that their introduction may well have had beneficial

effects in many schools. In a number of instances we have noted that they are likely to offer a stimulus to endeavour, or an inducement to remain for a further period at school, or to provide valuable training in method. In specific subjects we have noted valuable features; thus in some examinations in English we have welcomed the emphasis placed on the writing of continuous prose, and the inclusion of optional oral tests; in some of the examinations in modern languages we have seen papers which would undoubtedly give encouragement to good teaching methods, and a welcome emphasis on oral tests. In some examinations in handicrafts we have seen papers well designed to provide an incentive to pupils with practical leanings to develop their powers of expression.

56. Having said this, we must go on to say that we have found much that caused us misgiving, and some features that caused us grave disquiet. We have not the space, nor do we think it desirable, to attempt a separate assessment of the work of each individual Body that we were able to study. We can only give general impressions, and we realise that in generalising we may do less than justice in particular instances, the more so as we are dealing with a variety of examinations not all of which are designed for the same age and ability groups.

57. We have three main comments which seem to us to apply, in a greater or less degree, to most of what we have seen. First, the marking arrangements seemed to be far from satisfactory. A scrutiny subject by subject of the examinations available to us revealed all too often that marking was decidedly uneven; detailed mark-schemes often appeared to be lacking, and moderating arrangements to be defective. Moreover the marking seemed to be unduly lenient: while there were notable exceptions, we too often had the impression that the standard implied by a question was denied by the leniency of the marking.

58. Secondly, we found not only that the syllabuses are narrow—this may often be inevitable in view of the standard envisaged—but that the questions set are too predominantly of a kind that calls only for memorised facts and opinions, rather than eliciting the pupil's interest, imagination or comment from direct experience. For while we accept that at this as at any level a testing of the candidate's factual knowledge is essential, we believe that an examination which does no more than that is inadequate to its purpose and deadening in its effect on teaching in the schools.

59. Thirdly, we have the impression that, again with one or two exceptions, the examinations lack a distinctive aim of their own; that those planning them seem for the most part to have been content to borrow, at a lower level and with more restricted syllabuses, from the G.C.E. pattern, or that of the old School Certificate, whereas the need was for different syllabuses, types of question and even different marking schemes adapted to the somewhat different needs and interests of the pupils concerned. We were led to the conclusion, which was in some instances reinforced by a study of the Bodies' constitutions, that this defect comes partly from a lack of effective participation in the conduct of the examinations by teachers of the kind who are most concerned to make use of them. We know that most of the Bodies have arrangements for consulting teachers; and in one or two instances we have seen interesting attempts to improve these. But in general these examinations appeared to us to be, and to be regarded as, something essentially external in origin, rather than

growing up naturally out of the current practice of the schools, and therefore reflecting what is valuable and distinctive in their work.

60. It may help to give point to these comments if we supplement them by more detailed observations on examinations in particular subjects. Thus, we gave special attention to the examinations in English, because English is the subject likely to attract the largest number of entries, and the examinations in this subject are therefore liable to have wide influence on the teaching in the schools. We feel bound to record our view that some of the examinations in English which we saw would be liable to have narrowing and even stultifying effects on teaching in the schools, encouraging stereotyped responses at the expense of imagination and directness. In Geography again we found a preponderance of purely factual questions, encouraging memory rather than thought and inviting answers, particularly from the weaker candidates, in terms which would have little meaning for them and offer little incentive to the writing of good English. In some of the examinations in Handicrafts we found noticeably at work a tendency to follow the G.C.E. pattern, which, at the level aimed for, would be liable to encourage stereotyped teaching about basic facts and processes and to stifle many promising developments in the schools. We have similar comments on a number of papers in technical subjects, in Science and Mathematics. The syllabuses and papers in Science also led us to doubt whether results achieved on these examinations could be of much prognostic value in selecting pupils for courses of further education, at any rate those of more advanced standard. And the papers in Mathematics led us specially to wonder how far the examiners were in touch with recent developments in teaching methods in the schools.

61. We noted that two of the examinations of the larger bodies, including one of which we saw scripts, are intended to be taken by pupils at the end of a fourth year course at a secondary school, i.e. normally at the age of fifteen. For one of these, pupils may be entered even earlier. It appeared to us that many of the criticisms we have had to make applied with special force to the examinations intended for this age group. For this reason, as well as for others given later in our Report, we believe that, in considering the advantages and disadvantages of external examinations, a clear distinction has to be made between those intended for pupils at the end of a five year course and those intended for pupils at the end of a four year course, and that special objections apply to the latter.

62. We also note that, while some of the examinations we have been considering are on a "subject" basis, a number have limited the award of their certificates, or at any rate of their full certificates, to candidates passing in a group of subjects, somewhat on the pattern of the old School Certificate. We are well aware of the arguments in favour of a group certificate, notably that it encourages pupils and schools to maintain a reasonable spread of subjects, and offers evidence to employers and other users that the candidate possesses a good general education. Our own considered view, based on the experience of teachers in the use of the old School Certificate and in many other fields, is that examinations containing a group requirement, or even compulsory individual subjects, must in the long run have undesirable effects. In particular, they tend to undermine the freedom of teachers to devise courses suited to the needs of particular pupils, and create harmful pressures on individual pupils to prepare for examinations in subjects which for them would be better learnt in other ways.



63. Finally we must mention one other fact which we noted and which we believe to be important. We found little evidence that the Examining Bodies were paying special attention to research and to experiments in new techniques of examining appropriate to changing methods in the schools. It also seemed to us that, no doubt partly because of the present relationships, or lack of them, between the different bodies, there was little evidence of interchange and discussion between them such as might encourage the dissemination of useful ideas and experience.

*Probable lines of development in the 1960's*

64. Such in brief is the present pattern of examinations other than the G.C.E., and our assessment of the examinations we have seen. What of the next five or ten years? It is clearly of first importance, in a situation in which so much is new and many changes are taking place, to see not only what the pattern is now, but what it may be in 1965 or 1970, assuming no action is taken to affect the course of developments.

65 The facts and trends as we have seen them would seem to point to the following conclusions: first, if the increase in the numbers taking the examinations continues at anything like its present rate, it seems inevitable that within five or at the very most ten years' time the schools will almost without exception be entering those of their pupils who are in the appropriate age and ability ranges for external examinations. As far as we can see, almost all the factors at work are tending in this direction. It also seems likely that the non-G.C.E. Examining Bodies will claim a large and, as time goes on, a growing share in the increase of entries. The Examining Bodies themselves are, naturally and reasonably, active in extending their provision—we have seen that two large regional further education bodies have come into the field of school examinations in the past two years, and we understand that the City and Guilds of London Institute would like to introduce a school examination at an early date. There appears to be a strong and growing desire, both amongst teachers and amongst parents whose children are thought to be unsuited to attempt the G.C.E. examination, to enter them for some other examination with wider than local currency. Undoubtedly there are teachers, probably a minority, but including some who have given the matter much thought, who believe that external examinations do more harm than good, and will oppose their growth. But it must be recognised that at a certain point in the process these teachers will be under pressure, from parents and colleagues, to conform with the trend, so that in due course few if any will be able to stand out.

66. There is another tendency which, it may be suggested, will also inevitably make itself felt if the situation is allowed to develop on existing lines. The probability is that examining below the G.C.E. level will become increasingly concentrated in the hands of the eight existing regional and "national" Bodies which we have described, with the addition of perhaps one or two more. These are the bodies with resources and connections; and, other things being unchanged, it is likely to prove increasingly difficult for the smaller local bodies or groups to remain active, or for new Bodies to come into being without assistance. It follows that the existing Bodies will grow in both size and influence. It must be remembered that the size of the age-groups reaching examinable age will be growing rapidly in the early sixties, and it must be assumed that the numbers available to take examinations will be still further augmented by the continuance of the trend to longer school life. Even allowing

for a parallel growth in the numbers taking G.C.E. O level, it is evident that the size and scale of operations of the non-G.C.E. Bodies must continue to grow rapidly. This in its turn must increase their problems, and in particular that of keeping in close touch with the schools who use their examinations. This problem may well be serious even for some of the "regional" Bodies whose geographical sphere already extends over many counties. It can hardly fail to become acute for those London-based Bodies whose coverage is nation-wide. At the same time, as the numbers taking their examinations increase and employers and other users become familiar with their certificates, their syllabuses and papers will, if earlier history is any guide, come increasingly to influence the curriculum and teaching in the schools. Thus by the end of the decade, if not before, the business of external examining below the G.C.E. level will have become largely if not entirely concentrated in the hands of a limited group of examining bodies, free to pursue their own policies without reference to the long-term needs of the schools or of the educational system as a whole, growing rapidly and in danger because of their small number and the vast field open to them of becoming increasingly remote from the schools and teachers they serve. Yet they would exercise great and perhaps decisive influence on the development of the schools.

### CHAPTER III.

## The General Case For and Against External Examinations

67. In the last Chapter, we gave our evaluation of the existing examinations, drawing attention to what seemed to us to be their defects as well as their qualities. It will doubtless be said that most if not all of the criticisms we have made are by implication criticisms of the very idea of external examinations below the G.C.E. level; in other words, that *any* examinations at this level will inevitably be subject to weaknesses, and liable to produce harmful effects on the schools, of the kind indicated. To this general issue, what are the intrinsic advantages and dangers of external examinations at this level, and whether and if so how the dangers can be guarded against, we now address ourselves. We take as our point of departure what may be regarded as a classic summary of the arguments given by the Norwood Committee in their assessment of the School Certificate Examination (Part II, Chapter I). Another statement of the issues, that contained in the 1911 Report of the Consultative Committee on Examinations in Secondary Schools, is quoted at Appendix I.

#### (a) *The case in favour*

68. "The existence of an external examination has a tonic effect upon the pupil, giving him a goal towards which to strive and a stimulus to urge him to attain it. He must reach a given standard in a given time; he must have his knowledge in a form which he can reproduce, and he gains from the necessity to acquire that knowledge for a definite purpose. Since his effort must extend over a considerable period, he is trained in perseverance and steadfastness. He has confidence in the measurement of his attainments by an external standard, by which also his fellow pupils in his own school and in others are measured; if he fails or if he succeeds, he is satisfied that the test was objective and universal, and

this consideration is particularly valuable for pupils from schools which have not yet acquired a reputation as high as the longer established schools

69. For the teacher also a goal and a stimulus are desirable. He is provided with a syllabus of work which has been tested by experience; indeed he may put forward his own syllabus, though he rarely does, and means exist for him to bring criticism of the examination to the notice of examiners. By the syllabus he is given a sense of direction towards an end which can be reached. He must plan his work, treat it with consistent emphasis, avoiding the temptation to digress too far. He must attend equally to all pupils in his class, knowing that success or failure is as important to the bottom boy as to the top. From the syllabuses and papers he gains a sense of standard; he becomes acquainted with achievement elsewhere as assessed under similar conditions, and in the light of it he can estimate the success of his work. As regards the examination of his work, he would be placed in a difficult position if he were asked to examine the pupils whom he had taught.

70. On general grounds, it is maintained, the external examination is indispensable. The school is given a standard which it can strive to reach; it can thus measure itself against other schools and the standard of education throughout the country will thus be raised. If a test is to carry any weight outside the school, there must be some approximation to uniformity of standard in assessing attainment. The test and the verdict must be objective, and conditions must be equal; there can be no prejudice and no favouritism as between school and school or pupil and pupil. Employers, parents and Professional Bodies need the Certificate; employers ask for a disinterested assessment, and would not be satisfied with a Head Master's certificate; parents look for something which will be a hall-mark of their children, valid wherever in the country they may go.

#### *(b) The case against*

71. The School Certificate Examination is harmful to pupil and teacher and to education. It is the task of the school to provide the goal and the stimulus, in the way most appropriate to it, without the aid of an external examination which pervades the consciousness of pupil and teacher. At present the examination dictates the curriculum and cannot do otherwise; it confines experiment, limits free choice of subject, hampers treatment of subjects, encourages wrong values in the class-room. Pupils assess education in terms of success in the examination; they minimise the importance of the non-examinable and assign a utilitarian value to what they study. They absorb what it will pay them to absorb, and reproduce it as second-hand knowledge which is of value only for the moment. Teachers, recognising the importance of the parchment to the individual child, are constrained to direct their teaching to an examination which can test only a narrow field of the pupil's interest and capacities, and so necessarily neglect the qualities which they value most highly; they are forced to attend to what can be examined and to spoon-feed their weakest pupils. Originality is replaced by uniformity; the mind of the examiner supersedes that of the teacher; every effort is subservient to the examination, in order that a hall-mark, estimated by those to whom the pupil is an examination number, may be stamped upon a pupil on the result of a single judgment of the examinable portion of his work at a particular moment. No one can examine better than the teacher, who knows the child; and a method of examination by the teacher, combined with school records, could be devised which would furnish

a certificate giving information of real importance to employer or college or profession, and yet would preserve intact the freedom of the school and would rid teacher and pupil of an artificial restraint imposed from without. As for uniformity of standard, even under present conditions two apparently similar certificates mean very different things, and illusory uniformity can be bought too dearly."

*The nature of the problem in the 1960's*

72. The Norwood Committee, it must be remembered, were commenting on what was in many ways a different problem from that which confronts us, set in a different context. They were analysing the merits and defects of a recognised examination already in existence, namely, the School Certificate Examination, and were therefore able to reflect the actual experience of many who had benefited and suffered from it. We have had to try to envisage the effects of examinations which do not yet exist in any generally accepted form. They were thinking primarily in terms of a well-established pattern of education in a well-established type of school, namely, the grammar school. We have had to think primarily in the context of a newly-emerging pattern of secondary education, in which many teachers are still groping their way by experiment, and schools need freedom to grow. Furthermore, they were writing in a period of war-time transition when it was not easy to discern the characteristics and needs of the post-war educational scene. Coming to our problem 15 years after the end of the war and 16 years after the passing of an Education Act which gave a great new impetus to secondary education, we have had the advantage of being able to see more clearly than they could both the emerging pattern and the new needs created by the advance of secondary education on a wider front.

*The case in favour*

73. Much that the Norwood Committee said both for and against external examinations, though it was in a different context and related to a different examination, is undoubtedly valid today when applied to an external examination for the ability range somewhat below G.C.E., and has been reiterated by the witnesses we have seen and the evidence we have read. Thus on the favourable side, teachers and administrators have again and again emphasised the tonic effect which the introduction of external examinations has on the pupils in schools where they were not previously used, and not only on the particular pupils who are entered for the examination, but on other pupils in the school, and on the tone and self-esteem of the school as a whole.

74. In the context of the non-selective school, where the normal practice may be for children to leave at 15, they have also stressed the important effect which external examinations have had in encouraging the tendency to stay on for a fifth year, or at any rate for an additional one or two terms to enable the pupil to complete a fourth year and take an appropriate examination. Table 6 in Appendix 6 gives some indication of the extent to which staying on is in the view of teachers directly attributable to the existence of external examinations. (This is not to say that such examinations are regarded as the only factor at work in encouraging the tendency to stay on.)

75. Many of our witnesses have also stressed the benefits which these examinations bring for the teachers. They too gain from the tonic effect, from the heightened sense of purpose, from the greater eagerness of their pupils to learn, and to stay the course. And there is a further point, which has been made to

us, and is of special relevance in the new context of the non-selective schools. Many teachers in these schools believe that external examinations can provide as it were a landmark by which they can take their bearings and measure their standards and progress, in relation both to what is being achieved by other schools of the same type and to what is demanded by the world around them, whether employers, institutions of further education, or parents. This we have been told is a need which, in this exploratory phase of the development of secondary education in the non-selective school, is keenly felt by many teachers. Indeed we have the impression that there is increasing if not yet overwhelming support amongst those who teach in non-selective schools, and particularly amongst those who teach older pupils, for the further extension of external examinations of some kind; and this, if true, is a factor which we think should carry much weight in determining the issue.

76. There is one point about the arguments advanced in favour of external examinations on which many of our witnesses have insisted, and which we think it important to stress here. Often it would seem that the effects which have been described stem from the fact that the results of the examinations are to some degree regarded by parents and by employers, technical college principals and others who use them, as having external validity. In what sense and to what degree they need to have this validity are difficult questions to which we revert later; and it will be seen that we have reservations about the extent to which employers or technical college principals and other "users" demand, or take account of, the resulting certificates, and also about the degree of uniformity of standard which it is desirable to attempt. We are also aware that it is precisely because external examinations have to some degree to fulfil conditions as regards external validity that they also bring attendant evils in their train. But since the view has been expressed, and is in fact embodied in Circular 326 which states the current policy of the Minister, that a system of examinations for modern schools could be made effective *without* introducing an element of externality, we wish to state our conviction that there is a close connection, which is liable to become still closer as the pupil's age increases, between the tonic effects of such examinations and their externality. In other words we think the dilemma must be faced. If the schools want the benefits of these examinations, they risk having to pay the price in terms of attendant evils and dangers. It is to these we now turn.

#### *The case against*

77. "The examination dictates the curriculum and cannot do otherwise; it confines experiment, limits free choice of subject, hampers treatment of subjects, encourages wrong values in the class-room." We have heard these warnings reiterated, in terms of their own experience and judgement, by teachers, by educational administrators, and not least by the Council's expert subject advisers who helped us with our study of some of the existing examinations. These arguments, it has been put to us, have all the more force as applied to examinations designed for ability ranges below the G.C.E. level, precisely because the educational pattern in which they will mostly be used is at a relatively early stage of evolution, when diversity and freedom to experiment are all-important, and anything may be harmful which introduces, and adds the stimulus of competition to, a tendency to uniformity, to rigidity in method or subject matter, to mediocrity of standards. In the words of the Ministry's Circular 289, "An examination on a national basis for modern schools would induce

uniformity of syllabuses, curricula and methods at stages and ages where uniformity would be most undesirable. Schools would feel unable to resist pressure to enter pupils for it, and the Minister fears that it would prejudice the more widespread development of the varied and lively courses already to be found in the best modern schools." "There is also the risk," the circular continues—and this danger too we have had in mind—"that it would be regarded as an index to the efficiency of schools, a conception which would be unrealistic and even oppressive in view of the wide differences in their circumstances and in the ranges of ability of their pupils."

78. There is a further argument that can be and has been adduced. Non-selective schools cover a very wide range of aptitude and intelligence. But an examination, it is pointed out, has to be pitched at a particular level. At what level will this examination be pitched? If it is designed for children in the upper ranges of ability, say the first 30% in the age group, can it offer anything which is not already provided by the Ordinary level of the G.C.E.? And even if it can, will its existence not give rise to a sense of failure in the remaining two-thirds, or rather enhance the sense of failure that may already have been engendered in them by their assignment to a non-selective school? If on the other hand the examination is pitched at a considerably lower standard, so as to cater for the "middle-of-the-road" pupil, will not the numbers taking it, which may run into hundreds of thousands, be such that it will inevitably become a "mass" examination? Examinations for these large numbers, it is urged, tend inevitably to produce "standardization of marking, achieved by a system of markable points; and the only markable points which are both recognizable at a glance and sufficiently objective to ensure uniformity among a large panel of examiners are *facts* and standardized opinions".\* This theme, already implicit in some of our own comments in Chapter II on the work of the existing Examining Bodies, is also taken up in Circular 289. "A new examination would have to be designed either for a relatively small proportion of the most able pupils just below G.C.E. standard, or for the majority of pupils leaving at the age of 15. The former would be open to the general objections [indicated] . . . and it could not fail to exert undesirable pressures on those for whom it was too stiff. Moreover its use could not be restricted to modern schools. . . . An examination aimed at the majority of pupils leaving at the age of 15 would be of such a low standard that certification on a national basis would be of little real value. During a period when the modern schools ought to be encouraged to grow steadily in stature such an examination would tend to fix a "modern school standard" too modest to act as an incentive to development. Moreover boys and girls who had obtained a certificate at the age of 15 might well be tempted to leave when they ought to be staying on for a year or two more."

79. Circular 289 made a further point. While acknowledging that there is a widespread demand amongst both employers and principals of institutions of further education for reliable information about the capacities of potential recruits, it expressed the Minister's doubts "whether at the early age of 15 such examinations would provide the most informative sort of credential. Where certificates of one kind or another exist there is always a danger that too much reliance will be placed upon them." The circular urged that at

\* Frank Whitehead "External Examinations Examined": *The Journal of Education*, January 1956.

this age Heads' reports and school records provide a more reliable basis for judgement, whether for employers or for principals of further education institutions.

80. We note again here, as we noted in Chapter II, that most of the arguments against external examinations apply with greatest force to those for which pupils are entered at the age of 15, or in the fourth year of their secondary school course, and with correspondingly less force to examinations at sixteen. On this issue of age we shall have more to say later. We also think it relevant here again to draw attention to the development in the Minister's policy which was contained in the later Circular 326, of July 1957, as regards selection of students for courses of further education. While the Minister considered that in most cases an external examination was unnecessary for this purpose, he conceded that special difficulties might arise when technical colleges draw their students from an exceptionally large number of secondary schools. In such cases he thought an external examination might seem useful as an instrument of selection, and said he was "prepared to modify the general policy expressed in Circular 289 to the extent that he will not discourage the use of a regionally organised external examination for this limited purpose to be taken by pupils who will be 16 or over on 1st September in the year concerned." We shall touch on this point again in Chapter V.

81. Circular 289 however indicates that an examination below the G.C.E. level for 16-year-olds might be open to a further objection, namely, that it might attract the weaker pupils in selective schools, and might thus entail a risk of lowering standards in those schools.

82. Some of our witnesses have also drawn attention to another danger which might arise with the introduction of additional external examinations suitable for certain limited groups of children. Even if the standard set is a relatively low one, appropriate let us say to as many as one-half of a given age-group, there is still the problem of the remaining half. It must be supposed that for many years to come there will be a substantial proportion, perhaps even a majority, of children, for whom written examinations involving external assessment of any kind will be altogether unsuitable, or suitable only over a small range of the child's school activities. The danger is that, as time goes on, more and more of this group will be driven, by parental insistence, by the demands of the outside world, by the pressure of competition within the school, or through the operation of competition between school and school, to attempt the examinations and to find that their school careers are conditioned by the prospect of doing so. The pressure will be for more and more to take the examination and there will be no clear line at which the process can be halted.

83. There is a parallel danger that more and more subjects and school activities will be brought within the field of examinations, some of them unsuited to written examination of any kind; and that there will be a corresponding tendency for the unexamined or the unexaminable to be devalued in the eyes of children, teachers and parents.

84. Finally, there must be weighed in the balance both the administrative difficulties and the financial cost of providing for anything like a national system of examinations at this level. Even a system of examinations limited to sixteen-year-olds might eventually have to reckon with an annual entry of perhaps as many as 200,000 candidates. Not the least serious of the administrative problems, it is suggested, would be that of finding sufficient examiners of experience

and competence, at a time of year when serving teachers are not easily available. And it is urged that the cost is not an entirely negligible factor. For even if the examining were done by Examining Bodies whose costs were covered by fee income, it must be assumed that the fees would be paid by the local education authorities and that to a certain extent this would be a new commitment for them. More is said about these matters in Chapter IV, and some estimate of the net additional expenditure for the country as a whole is given in Appendix 10.

### *The immediate issue*

85. Before attempting to bring the discussion to a point and to recommend a course of action, we briefly recapitulate our findings up to this point.

86. First, there is already one external examination firmly established in the secondary schools, with the full approval of the Minister, and increasingly taken by pupils from non-selective as well as from selective schools. The question therefore is not whether there should be external examinations in secondary schools, or in non-selective schools, but whether there should be external examinations other than the G.C.E., and if so, what. That was the problem set to us in our terms of reference.

87. Secondly, there is already in existence a variety of external examinations other than the G.C.E., local, regional and national, designed for pupils of sixteen, of fifteen and in some cases even of fourteen. Pupils over sixteen may be entered for these by their schools so that the fees are paid by the local education authority. For the rest the fees have to be paid by the parents and the practice of entering pupils for these examinations has grown up in face of official discouragement. Despite this, there is evidence of a widespread and growing demand for these examinations amongst teachers and parents; the number of children taking them is growing rapidly; it is likely that the examinations of the larger Bodies will increasingly win favour; and the Examining Bodies are budgeting for further increases.

88. Thirdly, our study of the examinations conducted by some of the existing Bodies has led us to the conclusion that, though they are in some respects doing valuable work, their examinations appear liable to produce undesirable results in a number of ways, and that if, as on present trends seems likely, they were to grow in their present form to a point at which they largely dominated the curriculum and teaching, the schools would be in very real danger of finding their freedom restricted and their growth inhibited by Bodies in whose policies they had little or no effective voice.

### *Possible courses of action*

89. Against this background, what courses of action are open to the Minister? There is one course which we believe must be ruled out from the start, namely any attempt at a general prohibition by the Minister on all external examinations other than the G.C.E. Even if it proved possible for the Minister to take the necessary powers, we very much doubt whether such a prohibition could be made effective; and we are convinced that we could not advise the Minister to contemplate this course.

90. It seems to us therefore that in effect there are broadly only two possible courses open. One is that matters should be left much as they are, with the Minister continuing to adopt a discouraging or at least a neutral attitude to



examinations other than the G.C.E., and leaving the demand for such examinations to be met as now by unrecognised independent Bodies, supplemented locally by local education authorities where they think fit. The other alternative is for the Minister himself to take the initiative in providing, or stimulating the provision of, examinations at the appropriate level, conforming to requirements of his choosing. The assumption underlying this alternative would be, not that all other examinations would be prohibited, but that the examinations having the Minister's recognition would come to be those generally chosen by parents and teachers.

91. Amongst the arguments put to us in favour of the former course, we would mention three. First, it is said that for the Minister to take positive action, for instance by selecting certain examinations for his approval, would be a serious interference with the freedom, both of the schools concerned, many of which have hitherto had a large measure of freedom from official external examinations, and also of the Examining Bodies themselves. With the argument that the freedom of the schools would be curtailed we are not impressed. We think all the probabilities are that this freedom—the reality of which we think may in any event have been overrated—will be curtailed in any case by the growth of external examinations of some kind or other, and we believe this curtailment will in the end be greater if the examinations continue to be provided by independent Bodies exempt from any form of recognition. It is no doubt true that ministerial action might curtail the freedom of the Examining Bodies; but that we think may be inevitable if the educational development of the schools is to be safeguarded.

92. The second argument which has been put to us is that the disadvantages and dangers of external examinations of any kind below the level of G.C.E. are intrinsically so great that the Minister should resolutely maintain his refusal to have anything to do with them. If individual parents, schools and even local education authorities wish to experiment with them, they cannot be prevented from doing so; but at least the Minister can refrain from precipitating the movement in favour of mass examinations by giving any or all of them his official encouragement.

93. We respect this point of view, but we believe that it rests on an underestimate of the strength of the tendencies at work. We believe, as we have said, that within a relatively few years the tendency towards the taking of external examinations amongst pupils below the G.C.E. group will gather such momentum that, even with continued ministerial discouragement, almost all schools will find themselves willingly or unwillingly conforming. The actual effect of a policy of non-intervention would thus be not to arrest the movement in favour of external examinations, but to bring it about that the conduct and policy of the examinations would remain, and be increasingly concentrated, in the hands of the existing Bodies (with the addition of perhaps one or two more), who would exercise this greatly increased influence without any central co-ordination or guidance. We think this is a situation which even some of the Bodies themselves might regard with concern. We are convinced, for reasons given above, that it is one which would entail grave dangers for the development of secondary education in the next ten years.

94. Moreover it is our considered view that many of the defects and dangers we found in the existing examinations arise not from the intrinsic nature of examinations at this level but from the particular circumstances in which these examinations have grown up, and in some cases from the policies pursued by

the Examining Bodies. We are convinced that, if certain conditions are fulfilled, external examinations can make a constructive contribution to the educational process at this level as well as others, and in addition have a useful part to play in helping children to find the place in the community most suited to their abilities. While we acknowledge the dangers, we believe that these can be in large measure guarded against; and we further believe that an initiative on the part of the Minister now could be effective in assisting the emergence of a more suitable examination pattern.

95. We note that the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) which gave much thought to this question, also reached the conclusion (in Chapter 8 of their Report) that, despite the dangers of external examinations below the G.C.E. level, an attitude of complete negation on the part of the Minister was no longer possible, that there is a group "consisting of about one-third or rather more of the pupils in modern schools," for whom external examinations below the G.C.E. level may serve a useful purpose, and that official policy would have to be modified to meet this demand. We are encouraged to find that on this basic point our own conclusions accord with those of the Central Advisory Council.

96. We further note, however, that in view of the complexity of the problem they recommended a waiting period of, say, five years, during which further information could be gathered and experiment undertaken. We have considered this suggestion carefully, but have come to the conclusion that it does not now meet the case. As regards information available, we would hope that our own researches may have gone some way to provide what was needed. At any rate we believe that enough is now known to form a basis for decisions. As for further experiment, we have reasons for thinking that the present situation in which there is some degree of competition between a small number of autonomous Bodies is not at all conducive to useful experiment, and that a state of affairs in which the Minister himself accepted some degree of responsibility would be more congenial to the kind of experiment and research that is needed. But, most important of all, the facts which our survey has brought to light about the extent and rate of growth of these examinations make it clear in our view that the risks of a further waiting period would greatly outweigh the advantages. At the end of another five years the Minister might well find himself confronted with a situation which was both more dangerous to the well-being of the schools and much more difficult to remedy.

97. We have thus been led to the conclusion, and it is unanimous, that the right course is for the Minister to take the initiative at an early date, by indicating the kind of examinations which he could recognise as appropriate in the new situation, and by stimulating and if necessary assisting the formation of Examining Bodies willing and able to offer such examinations. In the following chapter, after specifying what examinations we think would not be appropriate, we set out the criteria we propose the Minister should apply in according his recognition.

## CHAPTER IV

### Our Proposals

#### *Types of examination which are unsuitable*

98. We are now in the position to state our own conclusions about the kinds of examination which would meet the needs of the new situation, and those

which would not. We begin with the latter. First, it is our considered view that the development of secondary education in this country has now reached a point at which external examinations taken at the age of 15, or rather at the end of a four year course of secondary education, are inappropriate, and that any further extension of their use would tend to hinder rather than to promote educational advance. We also note in this context that there is evidence for thinking that external examinations designed to be taken at 15 are specially liable to produce undesirable side-effects on the schools. Further, we have it in mind that where fourth year examinations are available alongside a fifth year examination, there is always a danger, as was found to be the case before the old "Junior Certificate" examination was given up, that pupils will be entered for one after the other, and thus subjected to excessive examining. Our view is that at the end of the fourth year nothing other than a purely internal school examination is desirable.

99. Secondly, we are of the opinion that the local examination, whether designed by local groups of teachers or organised or sponsored by a local education authority, will soon cease to be appropriate to the needs of the situation, if it has not already become so. To a large extent, this follows from our first conclusion, since most local examinations are designed to be taken at the end of a fourth year. We have also made the point, in Chapter II, that local examinations may come to lack appeal after a time because the results achieved on them are found to have little or no currency outside the localities in which they operate. Further, we think there are serious objections to examinations being provided by a single local education authority for the schools within its area. We believe that such an arrangement is liable to put the local education authority in a position of exercising altogether excessive influence over the curriculum and teaching in the schools, given the extent to which these may be determined by such an examination, and given also the difficulty which individual schools may have in refusing to use the examinations provided.

100. Thirdly, we are clear, and in this we entirely agree with the opinion expressed by the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), that external examinations designed for students attending part-time courses of further education are inappropriate for school pupils.

*The G.C.E. O level, and the limits of its use*

101. We think this is the place to comment on certain suggestions about the extended use of the G.C.E. O level which have been made to us and which, though strictly speaking they fall outside our terms of reference, we believe we are bound to consider. In doing so, we wish to make quite clear our view that there is and will continue to be a group of abler pupils, whether in grammar or other secondary schools, for whom the G.C.E. O level, in a range of four or more subjects, is the appropriate examination; and in all we say we assume that a number of the abler pupils from non-selective schools who are thought to fall into this category will be encouraged to take this examination. The problem implicit in what follows is how wide a range of pupils should properly be included in this category.

102. One suggestion put to us is that much more extensive use could be made of the existing G.C.E. O level than is made at present in non-selective schools. Recent experiments have indicated, it is said, that children in ability ranges

well below those at present considered suitable for G.C.E. can enter successfully for this examination, at any rate in two or three subjects. It is urged that if the G.C.E. Examining Boards were willing further to adapt their examinations to the special needs of children in this group, this process might even be carried to a point at which the use of other external examinations, at any rate for those completing a fifth year course, would become unnecessary.

103. We regarded this as an important suggestion and considered it carefully. But we came definitely to the conclusion that the extended use of the existing G.C.E. O level examination cannot meet all the needs arising. We have no doubt that this examination can be and will be more extensively used than at present in many non-selective schools for pupils staying on till sixteen. But we are equally clear that the number of pupils in this group for whom the G.C.E. O level taken in a range of four or more subjects is a suitable examination must be regarded as very strictly limited, amounting at most to 20% of the total age-group at 16 (including those in selective schools and streams). Immediately below this group we think there may be a band of pupils who may, not without some benefit, attempt O level in two or three subjects, perhaps simultaneously attempting other subjects in some other examination.

104. But, for those who are not in one or other of these two groups, we are convinced that the G.C.E. O level is an unsuitable examination, and that an attempt to enter them for it on a large scale, such as might follow from the suppression of all other external examinations, would put undue strain on the pupils, and would also distort the work of the schools, inhibiting many valuable experiments and developments. We believe that this objection would apply even if the G.C.E. Examining Bodies were more free than in most cases they are, owing to their status as university bodies, to adapt their examinations to the needs of different types of school. What is here at issue is at least in part a matter of standards, and we would not think it desirable that, in order to cater for the needs of the ability ranges we have in mind, the G.C.E. Bodies should be asked to consider abating the high standards they require.

105. This leads us to comment on a further suggestion put to us in connection with the G.C.E., namely, that the needs of the pupils we have in mind might be met by instituting a new level, below O level, which would correspond approximately to the old School Certificate pass. We think this proposal is open to even more serious objections. In the first place we very much doubt whether all the G.C.E. Examining Bodies would be willing and able to contemplate the large additional commitment which would be involved in providing for a lower level of pass, particularly if, as seems likely, it would entail the provision of a complete new examination at the level needed. In the second place, even if Boards were in some cases willing to contemplate such a step, we would doubt whether their constitutions would permit them to provide examinations which fulfil the conditions we have in mind, notably that they should be predominantly controlled by teachers in the schools making use of them. Thirdly, we believe that what is wanted is not an examination which simply reproduces the G.C.E. pattern at a lower level, but an examination with a different character and aims.

106. For the reasons given in the preceding paragraphs we are unanimously of the opinion that the needs of pupils in the ability range with which we are specially concerned cannot be entirely met by a more extensive use of the

G.C.E. O level examination, and that other examinations on somewhat different lines are called for.

107. It has been pointed out to us that any solution of the problem which involves the introduction of examinations other than the G.C.E. will give rise to a difficulty of another kind. If there are to be two sets of external examinations, namely, the G.C.E. O level and the new examinations, and assuming both sets of examinations will be equally available to the schools, teachers may be faced with difficult choices in deciding which pupils should take which examinations; and smaller schools may have serious difficulty in providing courses for both. These difficulties may arise not only in non-selective schools, but also in some cases in selective schools, which might be led to consider entering some of their weaker pupils for the new examinations.

108. We acknowledge that such difficulties will arise and we do not wish to minimise them. We would however point out that they already arise under existing arrangements where schools enter pupils both for the G.C.E. and for other external examinations; and even if no changes were made, they would continue to arise on an increasing scale as the examinations provided by the non-G.C.E. bodies gained wider currency. Indeed they could only be avoided altogether either by the prohibition of all external examinations below the G.C.E. level or by using the G.C.E. itself on an extensive scale for candidates for whom it is unsuitable. Given that the only practicable course is to allow the provision of different examinations for those in the ability range below the G.C.E. level, we believe that the proposals we make, which provide for flexibility, for example by allowing pupils to take single subjects in both examinations, should reduce the difficulties as far as possible.

#### *Our proposals. Criteria for suitable examinations*

109. We now attempt to formulate the criteria to which we believe any new pattern of examinations must conform if the examinations are to play a constructive role in the schools, and if the dangers indicated in earlier chapters are to be minimised.

(i) Candidates must have reached an age, and a stage in their education, when they have attained sufficient knowledge and understanding to justify their being tested by written examination. We believe the appropriate stage is the end of a fifth year course, when candidates will be about 16.

(ii) The examinations should be designed to suit candidates of a reasonably high competence and ability at a level somewhat below that of G.C.E. O level; and it should be clearly recognised that there is a level of ability below which it would be unprofitable as a rule to attempt to examine. Even within the ability group we have in mind there may be marked divergences; and for this reason we shall propose examinations with credit as well as pass standards.

(iii) In order to safeguard the freedom of the teachers, and indeed to stress their obligation, to plan curricula to suit the needs of individual children, the examinations should be "subject" and not "group" examinations.

(iv) The examinations and syllabuses should be specially designed to suit the needs and interests of children in the ability range rather than simply attempting to reproduce the G.C.E. pattern at a lower level.

(v) The teachers in the schools using the examinations must have a major role in operating them and shaping their policy. This means that the

Examining Bodies must be neither so large that their administrative offices become, geographically and in other ways, remote from the schools nor so small in number of candidates, nor so located, that they fall under the more or less exclusive influence of a single local education authority.

(vi) In order both that each Examining Body should be kept in touch with new techniques and developments in examination practice, and also that there should be some safeguard of standards, there will be need for co-ordination and systematic research by a central body with the staff and resources to carry out its duties.

We develop these six points in more detail in what follows.

#### (i) *Age of candidates*

110. We are clear that the stage in the pupil's school career, not his precise age, is the relevant consideration, and that the suitable stage is in the last term of the fifth year. Assuming that the normal age of transfer to secondary education is 11+, this means that children would take the examination at about 16. A limited proportion of candidates would need to be admitted who were two or three months below 16 at the time of the examination. We are clear that candidates should not be admitted to the examinations below this age, for example, as a preliminary to entering for G.C.E. at 16.

#### (ii) *Level of ability*

111. We have given much thought to the question, for what ability range the examinations should be designed. We have assumed that up to 20% of the total sixteen-year-old age group may be expected to attempt (though not necessarily to pass) G.C.E. O level in a fair range of subjects, say four or more. We think that candidates in the next 20% of the age group might take the examinations in a fair spread of subjects, say four or five (unless they were simultaneously attempting particular subjects in the G.C.E.), and that the standard of the papers set and the marking should be such that a substantial majority of pupils within this group might expect, without undue pressure, to obtain passes in this range of subjects. We think that candidates within a range up to about the next 20% of the age group, who are those round about the average of ability, might attempt, and often secure passes in, fewer subjects. We do not of course wish to suggest that the proportion awarded passes, and therefore the pass-mark, should be determined on hard-and-fast statistical lines. We foresee that much experiment will be needed before appropriate standards can be defined, and that even then variation must be expected between one subject and another.

#### *"Pass" and "credit" markings*

112. We think it important that the examinations should provide for the possibility of able candidates obtaining some special or "credit" award at an appropriate level above the pass mark in each subject. We think this might be so fixed that it could be attained by very roughly 20-25% of those passing. We are aware that this proposal will complicate the task of those setting the papers and increase the time required for marking them. We believe the disadvantages of this device are greatly outweighed by the advantages, notably the greater incentive it provides for the able pupils, and the additional informa-

tion it provides for those making use of the examination results. We are aware that the Secondary School Examinations Council when asked to consider the introduction of grading in the G.C.E. O level examination decided against it. We understand that that decision was made on the assumption that the numerical marks awarded to successful candidates would be generally available. In the examinations we have in mind we would hope that marks would not normally be made available. We would also emphasise that these will be primarily school leaving examinations. These considerations in our view make it all the more desirable that a credit as well as a pass standard should be provided for. We do not wish at this stage to attempt to define the standard either of the pass or of the credit level with reference to the standard of the G.C.E. O level examination.

113. We are aware that neither this nor any other specific proposal we have made offers a complete answer to the objection that any examinations proposed for children in ability ranges immediately below the G.C.E. O level will, if they are to maintain certain standards, prove unattainable to a large proportion, perhaps nearly half, of the children in the non-selective schools and streams, and may therefore risk giving rise in them to a sense of inadequacy. We would point out that this is a problem which arises and will continue to arise whether or not our proposals are accepted, since external examinations, G.C.E. and other, will continue to be taken in the schools in any event. We would not think it right to deprive some children of the chance of taking examinations because there were others for whom the examinations were not suitable. We would hope and assume that the schools themselves would be aware of the possible dangers arising in this connection for the children who stay on until 16 but cannot take the examinations, and would continue to give careful thought to methods of meeting them, such as the devising of suitable tests of other kinds, coupled with systematic arrangements for the keeping of school records.

(iii) *The desirability of "subject" not "group" examinations*

114. For reasons given in the previous chapter, we believe that there are serious objections to any requirement that candidates should take a group of subjects or compulsory subjects, and we therefore favour an examination taken on a "subject" basis. This means that candidates, provided they fulfil other conditions for entering for the examinations, would be free (as they are in the G.C.E.) to enter in three or two subjects or even in one subject only, and to obtain certificates accordingly. From an educational point of view we think that this will have a number of advantages; for example, it will give an opportunity for children in ability ranges below those for whom we have indicated the examinations are primarily designed to show a competence they may have attained in one or two favoured subjects. It will also allow of greater flexibility for candidates on the borderline of the G.C.E. group, since it would permit them to take certain subjects in the G.C.E. and others in these examinations, whatever school they attend.

(iv) *Examinations with a different approach*

115. We have emphasised that the examinations should not attempt merely to provide a replica at a somewhat lower level of the G.C.E. O level examination, but that they should seek to achieve aims and a character of their own. These will clearly vary from subject to subject. We think it important that

wherever the subject allows, the examinations should provide for practical work. We hope that in all subjects they would aim to encourage candidates to show a genuine interest, or what might be called "involvement", in their subjects, and would give credit for freshness of approach, intelligence, and ability to write good English, as well as for remembered facts and textbook learning. In Appendix 8 we have included suggestions which have been put to us for examinations in two important subjects, namely English and Handicrafts, as illustrations, for purposes of discussion, of the principles which we think might be applied in designing examinations of the kind we propose. If our Report is accepted, we would hope that further suggestions of this kind, about these and other subjects, would be forthcoming and would be a matter for discussion amongst those concerned with these examinations in all parts of the country.

#### *(v) Teacher-controlled examinations*

116. Since the primary object of the examinations as we envisage them is to serve a constructive educational purpose in the schools themselves, it is in our view fundamental that the teachers in the schools which will use them should play a major part in the arrangements. This has been our starting point in consideration of the machinery for providing the examinations. Here it may be convenient to draw a distinction between (a) the actual conduct of an examination, i.e. the selection of examiners, the preparation of syllabuses, the setting of papers and the marking of scripts and (b) the general administration and oversight of the examination, including such matters as the appointment of office staff, finance, the fixing and collection of entry fees, and the payment of examiners' fees.

117. We think that general responsibility for the functions (both at (a) and (b)) should be in the hands of a number of "regional" Examining Bodies. On the one hand these should be sufficiently numerous to ensure that the number of schools participating is kept within strict limits, so that all the schools in a Body's area can have relatively easy contact with its administrative offices, and there is scope for the development of a sense of corporate unity amongst the schools co-operating in the area. On the other hand the number of Bodies, and the area covered by any one Body, should not be such that an individual Body's area would be co-terminous with that of a single local education authority, however large. We would think that a group of about 200 or at most 300 schools, accounting between them for, say, 10,000 to 20,000 candidates, might reasonably be expected to work together in this way. We reckon that to cover the country, about twenty such Bodies would eventually be needed. At Appendix 9 we give some suggestions as to the areas which the twenty bodies might cover. We would expect that schools would normally make use of the Examining Body which was appropriate for their area, and in whose operations they would have a voice. We would also think it important that these Bodies would normally accept only candidates entered by schools (including both maintained and independent schools).

118. The Governing Councils of the Regional Bodies should include

- (i) teachers serving in the region;
- (ii) representatives of local education authorities in the region;
- (iii) one or more representatives of institutions of further education in the region;



(iv) one or more representatives of Area Training Organisations in the region;

(v) one or more representatives of employers in the region.

We would hope that each Body would be able to obtain the services of some person of distinction and influence in the region who would serve as chairman, and whose name might appear on the certificates which it grants.

119. We think that the functions associated with the actual conduct of the examinations listed at (a) of paragraph 116 should be so delegated by the Governing Council that they rest predominantly in the hands of a committee of teachers serving in the schools which use the examinations, with perhaps an admixture of retired teachers and others with special experience of examining. All these should be people in close touch with the schools in the Examining Body's area; and we assume that there would also be panels of local teachers to advise on syllabuses and papers in particular subjects. In the actual examining we accept that the principles here indicated should not be carried to the point of allowing teachers to mark their own pupils' scripts; but we see no good reason why teachers should be precluded from taking part in an examination because the papers might be used in their own schools.

120. The functions listed at (b) of paragraph 116 would be dealt with by the Governing Council itself, or delegated to a Finance and General Purposes Committee, which should contain some, but not necessarily a majority, of teachers.

#### *Recognition of Examining Bodies and examinations*

121. How would these Bodies and their examinations come into being and receive recognition? We envisage that the Minister would announce that as from a given date he was prepared to entertain applications from intending Examining Bodies, for approval both of their own status as Examining Bodies for the purpose of conducting secondary school examinations other than the G.C.E. for school pupils, and of the examinations which they intended to provide. We would hope that initiatives would come from groups of teachers, local education authorities and others concerned in each of the various areas designated. We think it might be desirable for the Minister to organise conferences in some or all areas with a view to promoting suitable and generally acceptable arrangements in those areas. We would assume that in considering whether to give approval the Minister and the body constituted to advise him on the matter would apply the criteria we have indicated in the foregoing paragraphs. We would also assume that the fees of pupils entered from maintained schools for the approved examinations of Bodies so recognised would be met by local education authorities.

122. We have considered carefully whether the Minister should be advised to entertain applications from existing Examining Bodies. We are clear that he should not be advised to do so if it entails making exceptions to the criteria we propose; and it seems to us inevitable that if the Bodies as at present constituted were to make applications, they would have to be ruled out for this reason. If, however, any of the Bodies were willing to reorganise themselves and to redefine their aims and policies with a view to meeting the Minister's requirements, we would not wish to rule out applications from them; and we even think this might prove a practicable way of ensuring that the experience and in some cases the administrative arrangements of some of

these Bodies would be available under the new system. What we have in mind is that in a particular area an existing regional or even "national" Body might, at the instance of the teachers and local education authorities in that area, be invited to reorganise itself, for the purpose of conducting these examinations, as a Body serving a more limited geographical area, with a revised constitution and policies conforming to those here proposed. In some regions two (or more) Bodies covering adjacent areas might operate initially with joint administrative arrangements, provided that they conformed to the criteria, and that in due course, when the numbers of candidates increased, each would become fully autonomous and operate as a separate Body with its own administration.

### *Supply of Examiners*

123. It has been put to us that the problem of finding sufficient examiners to conduct examinations which might eventually have to accommodate some 200,000 candidates each year is likely to prove a formidable one, particularly in a period of teacher shortage. Though we do not underrate the difficulty, we do not think it is by any means insuperable. We would not expect the numbers entering for the examinations to reach anything like the figure of 200,000 in the initial stages. The numbers of teachers required initially for examining would be a matter of hundreds rather than of thousands, and we think this should not prove a serious strain on the resources of the schools. Given the basis on which it is proposed that the Examining Bodies should be constituted, we believe the Bodies should be able to rely on the schools to make a positive contribution by encouraging their teachers to serve as examiners during term-time, and that teachers will welcome the opportunity to do so. We would also hope and expect that local education authorities would give what help they could in this matter. We think that careful consideration will need to be given to the fixing of examiners' fees, to ensure that they are sufficiently attractive to facilitate the recruitment of suitable examiners. We recognise that the remuneration of serving teachers who take part in the examinations might in certain cases be a matter requiring discussion between teachers' and local authority associations.

### *National validation of examination results*

124. We have carefully considered the difficult problem how far, in approving a particular examination, the Minister and any central body set up to advise him should accept responsibility with regard to the standard of that examination, and the comparability of its results with those of other similar approved examinations. It will not be overlooked that in the case of the G.C.E. examination, both at A and O level, the Minister and the Secondary School Examinations Council accept responsibility for ensuring that, within reasonable limits, comparability of standards is maintained as between different Examining Bodies from one subject to another and from one year to another; and that a number of public bodies such as universities and professional associations make their arrangements on this assumption. A similar problem will arise with regard to the examinations now proposed, particularly if the results come to be widely used outside the areas of the individual Examining Bodies, for example by employers, or as criteria for admission to courses of further education.

125. We think that, at any rate initially, it would be sufficient if, in giving his approval to examinations, the Minister were to satisfy himself that (a)

the Bodies supervising the examination conformed to the criteria we have proposed, (b) the particular examination was suitable, as regards syllabuses and question papers, for the age, ability and aptitude of fifth year pupils at the appropriate level, and (c) the marking schemes and general arrangements were fair and efficient, and the results reasonably consistent with those of similar Bodies in other areas. While it might be desirable during an experimental period for scripts to be examined in certain cases, we would not think it desirable to insist on such precise correlation of standards as would entail a large-scale inspection of scripts each year by a central body. We also think there is a risk that too much insistence on precise comparability might discourage local experiments in new methods of examining, and might tend to produce that uniformity of syllabus which many fear will be one of the harmful effects of examinations at this level. It follows from this that we would not think it necessary or desirable that the certificates should be countersigned, as is the case with the G.C.E., by an official of the Ministry. We would think it sufficient if the name of the Chairman of the Examining Body appeared on the certificate alongside that of the Secretary.

(vi) *Central machinery for recognition, co-ordination and research*

126. We now come to a discussion of the machinery needed for assisting the Minister in approving Bodies and examinations and securing effective co-ordination of their activities. Although we envisage the proposed Examining Bodies as having a considerable degree of autonomy, and do not see the need for arrangements to ensure a high degree of comparability of standards, we nevertheless think it of much importance, particularly in the early stages, that there should be at the centre, advising the Minister, a body equipped to undertake research and to keep itself informed both about the current work of the Examining Bodies and about what might be termed the best examination practice, whether in this or in other countries, and that it should be a condition of continued recognition of an Examining Body by the Minister that it should be willing to accept the general guidance of this central body. Since this body will be dealing with questions of secondary school examinations, its activities clearly come within the terms of reference of the Secondary School Examinations Council. But with every respect to our parent body we would venture to suggest that the Council, designed as it is at present to secure the co-operation of what are for the most part university Examining Bodies in providing an examination of an academic character at a higher level, would require some measure of enlargement to enable it to discharge its new responsibilities. Assuming that some such enlargement were acceptable, we envisage that the task of guiding and co-ordinating the new examinations might be assigned to a Standing Committee responsible to the Council for this work.

127. We also think that this proposed new Standing Committee would need the assistance of a small but highly qualified "research and development" unit. We have in mind an ad hoc group of five or six people knowledgeable about examinations and in close touch with current practice in the schools. We are clear that, in the early years of a system of examinations designed to be sensitive to the needs of the classroom in the way we propose, many new problems will be thrown up demanding continuous thought, observation and experiment. The group should therefore be continuously available; it would seek help wherever it was to be found: for some purposes it might look to the National Foundation for Educational Research, for others to research

done in university departments of education; on other occasions consultations with experts subject by subject would be required. In addition it is certain that such a large operation, in a field far from fully explored, where the intrinsic dangers are so considerable, will call for much liaison work and informed publicity. We think that the personnel for this unit might be made up partly of members of H.M. Inspectorate, specially charged to devote a substantial amount of their time to the work, and partly of teachers or organisers with appropriate experience seconded by local education authorities. We know that in putting forward this proposal we are making substantial demands on the time of some members of H.M. Inspectorate and others. We believe that the demands are justified by the imperative need to ensure that the new examinations develop on suitable lines in the formative stages.

### *Cost*

128. An attempt at estimating the cost of operations of an Examining Body of the size proposed has been made in Appendix 10. This shows that, once a Body reaches a certain size, it may be expected to be self-financing in the sense that its outgoings would be covered by income from examination fees. However, there would be an initial capital outlay, and a phase when Examining Bodies might be running at a loss and their operations would need to be subsidised. We hope that this might be done by payments by the Minister, perhaps in the form of headquarters' grants for administrative expenses to the Bodies concerned, until they were able to become self-supporting. The fees of pupils entered from maintained schools would be a charge on public funds since they would be payable by local education authorities. But in estimating the *net* additional cost to public funds, it is necessary to make allowance for costs which would be incurred by local education authorities for examination fees of existing Bodies even if no new scheme were introduced. It will be seen that the net additional cost for the country as a whole may be expected to be very roughly of the order of £300,000 a year in the early stages, rising perhaps to £600,000 as the numbers of entries increase to the full extent.

## CHAPTER V

### The Certificates and Their Use

#### *Examination certificates*

129. We assume that the results achieved by candidates in the examinations would be endorsed on certificates, which we suggest should be called Secondary School Certificates of the Examining Bodies issuing them, and which would carry the signatures of the Chairman and Secretary of the Body. These would show the subject or subjects in which the pupil had achieved a pass or a credit as the case might be. We think it important that the examinations should be held sufficiently early in the summer to ensure that the results would be generally available before the start of the main holiday season. This would mean that the examinations should normally be held in May, preceding the G.C.E. examination.

#### *Use of certificates by employers*

130. The evidence we had from representatives of industry and commerce indicated that there were differing opinions amongst employers as to the use-

fulness of examination results below G.C.E. level in providing information about applicants for employment. It appeared that the smaller firms tended to regard such results as more useful than did the larger firms who have the resources to make their own detailed inquiries about applicants. In general, however, it seemed that employers would welcome the information provided by regionally organised examinations of the kind we have in mind, particularly in selecting applicants for posts involving skill or responsibility. Given that the examinations we propose will be "subject" examinations, and that certificates may, therefore, be awarded to any candidate passing in one or more subjects, we hope that employers would pay attention to all the information contained on the certificates. We would also urge that, in making use of these examination results, employers should bear in mind the limitations of these or any examinations as a means of recording a pupil's achievements and potentialities, and would treat them as only one piece of evidence amongst others, such as Heads' reports, school records and personal interviews. We would go further and say that we think the usefulness of these examinations would be enhanced, and some of the dangers diminished, particularly for those in the lower ranges of ability, if the examination results could be associated with arrangements for the more systematic use of school records.

*Use by institutions of further education*

131. The evidence which we had from principals of technical colleges also revealed some differences of opinion about the extent to which the results of examinations such as we propose might prove useful to principals for their selection purposes. But we had the impression that many if not all principals would welcome the additional information provided, and indeed it has been clearly in our minds throughout that these examinations might be of value in the selection of candidates for further education courses. The need for careful selection in this field is becoming increasingly evident in view of the growing range and diversity of the courses that are being made available, and also of the high failure rates on many courses. This in itself led us to think that additional information such as these examinations could provide might be helpful to those specially concerned with assigning candidates to suitable courses. We have already noted that this was the one purpose for which the Minister, in Circular 326, said that he was prepared in certain circumstances to recognise the value of regionally organised external examinations below the level of G.C.E. We have therefore paid particular attention to this aspect of our problem.

132. In thinking about it we have had two considerations specially in mind. First, from the point of view of the schools, we think it important to insist that, however useful the results of the examinations may in fact prove to be for the purposes of selection for courses of further education, they should not be devised solely or even mainly with this purpose in view, but rather with a view to the educational purpose they can serve in the schools. Otherwise, we see a real danger that a system of examinations originally intended to be for the benefit of the schools might come to be conditioned by the requirements of the technical colleges, which would thus come to exercise undue influence over the curriculum of the schools.

133. Secondly, as we have said with regard to employers, we would hope that those in technical colleges who are concerned with placing students, and who would therefore make use of the results of these examinations, would treat

them as no more than one piece of evidence amongst others, and would continue to take full account of school courses followed, of school reports, the results of interviews, and other such information. We would also think it important that ways should be left open for those who are not able to show their quality in terms of school examination results.

134. Subject to these considerations, we think that the results of examinations of the kind described could play a useful part in assisting principals of technical colleges to assign candidates to suitable courses or streams, especially if, as is proposed, they provided for results at a credit as well as a pass level in each subject. In particular, they might be useful in helping those concerned to decide which candidates should be assigned to craft or technicians' courses, or to the final year of the proposed new general course designed to precede the shortened Ordinary National Certificate course.

135. We have not attempted to consider in detail what results should qualify candidates for admission to particular courses; we think it would be premature to do so until the examinations have established themselves and there is some measure of common agreement about the standards which they can achieve. When this stage has been reached, and when firm conclusions have been arrived at about future developments in the pattern of further education courses and about the standards and qualifications required for entry to the courses provided, further detailed discussions will undoubtedly be needed about the use which can be made of examination results in this connection. To a large extent these discussions will no doubt arise naturally out of the day-to-day work of the regional Examining Bodies which we have proposed, and whose governing councils we have assumed will include representatives of technical colleges. Such discussions at regional level would no doubt be linked with discussions at national level in which a reconstituted Secondary School Examinations Council of the kind that has been suggested would be involved together with the interests concerned in further education.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Position in Wales

#### *Historical background*

136. Up to this point in our report we have made no distinction between England and Wales; in general it seems to us that the main problems arising from our terms of reference are substantially the same in Wales as in England, and that the broad trend of educational development in Wales will be similar to that in England. Nevertheless, secondary education in Wales has distinctive features of its own which merit special attention.

137. Until the latter part of the nineteenth century, apart from a few non-conformist academies Wales was mainly dependent for "secondary" education on the old endowed grammar schools, which were few in number and severely limited in their financial resources. A widespread and growing demand for greatly increased grammar school provision, however, led in 1889 to the passing of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act which, largely as the result of local efforts, brought about the establishment, throughout the Principality,

of a system of "intermediate" schools, so called because they were intended to bridge the gap between the elementary schools and the newly founded University Colleges.

138. In 1896, by a scheme made by the Charity Commissioners under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, the Central Welsh Board was established as an examining and inspecting body whose functions were limited in the main to the field of the new intermediate schools. The Board undoubtedly met a real need and had a considerable influence on the development of these schools, particularly in their earlier years. The examinations of the Board later extended to all types of secondary (grammar) schools in Wales, and in due course it was recognised as an approved Examining Body. The Board ceased to exist in 1949 when its examination functions were taken over by the Welsh Joint Education Committee.

#### *The Welsh Joint Education Committee*

139. The Welsh Joint Education Committee was set up in 1949 by an Order of the Minister of Education made under the provisions of paragraph 3 of Part II of the First Schedule to the Education Act, 1944. It is composed of 112 members, of whom 84 are representative members appointed by the seventeen local education authorities in Wales; the remaining 28 are co-opted members representing teachers, chief education officers, the University of Wales and its constituent Colleges, industry and other interests. Its functions cover a wide range in the field of education and its numerous and varied duties are performed with the assistance of a number of sub-committees, each of which is suitably constituted, with appropriate co-optations, to carry out its own specific functions.

140. In this context, however, we are concerned mainly with the functions of the Welsh Joint Education Committee as an approved Examining Body. In this capacity the Committee conducts examinations for the General Certificate of Education for virtually the whole of Wales. In addition it conducts examinations from the preliminary to the final stage of the Ordinary National Certificate; these examinations are designed primarily for part-time further education students but they are taken also by a small number of secondary school pupils with the approval of their local education authorities.

141. These examining functions are virtually controlled by an Examinations Sub-Committee, the composition of which is subject to the approval of the Minister. At present this sub-committee consists of eleven teachers, five representatives of the University of Wales and its constituent Colleges, two Chief Education Officers, two representatives of industry, one University Professor Emeritus and six representatives of the local education authorities, together with the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Welsh Joint Education Committee ex-officio. Like the old Central Welsh Board the sub-committee is not a University body though it has a close working arrangement with the University of Wales, more especially at the Advanced and Scholarship levels of the G.C.E. For the purpose of its further education examinations, the sub-committee makes substantial use of its close association with the technical colleges.

#### *Current secondary school examinations.*

142. The position in Wales with regard to secondary school examinations is broadly similar to that in England. The main examination is that for the

G.C.E. In 1959, 21,148 candidates from 235 schools (or centres) presented themselves for the G.C.E. examinations of the Welsh Joint Education Committee. It is interesting to note that this number (21,148) is almost exactly twice the number (10,540) who took the examination in 1951 when the G.C.E. was first introduced. Of the total number of candidates 4,134 offered at least one subject at Advanced level while 17,014 offered subjects at the Ordinary level only. The number of external candidates (included above) was 558, and only a mere handful of candidates came from secondary modern schools.

143. The Welsh Joint Education Committee also provides external assessment for internal examinations held (in 1958) at 14 secondary technical schools in the areas of four local education authorities. Teachers in the schools concerned frame the syllabuses for these examinations, the contents and standard of which approximate to those of the S.1 stage of Ordinary National Certificate courses in corresponding subjects. Assessors drawn from the staffs of technical colleges moderate the question papers and assess the marks allocated by the teachers. Ages of candidates vary from 15+ to 16+, and successful candidates are awarded a Secondary Technical Certificate which may, at the discretion of the principal of the technical college, admit to or exempt from S.1 courses. Although this examination has served a useful purpose in past years, it is becoming, year by year, less widely used and is gradually being replaced by the G.C.E., in which the Committee offers a steadily increasing range of O level syllabuses designed mainly for pupils in secondary technical schools.

144. Of the seventeen local education authorities in Wales only two stated, in reply to a questionnaire sent to them in 1958, that they had no schools entering candidates for external examinations (other than the G.C.E.) conducted by the "national" or "regional" Examining Bodies. In the areas of the other fifteen authorities candidates were entered for examinations of The College of Preceptors, The General Nursing Council, The London Chamber of Commerce, the Pitman Examinations Institute, the Royal Society of Arts, the Union of Educational Institutions, the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes, the Welsh Joint Education Committee and certain examinations of the City and Guilds of London Institute. Candidates from some Welsh schools who are below the age of 16 enter for some of these examinations.

145. In addition, eight local education authorities conduct their own examinations for secondary school pupils. About 190 schools are involved, but only in one area is it compulsory for particular schools to enter candidates and for particular pupils to be examined. The examinations, which appear to vary substantially in a number of respects, are not intended for pupils of the "grammar school" type; in general they are designed for pupils aged 15+ in their fourth year at school. Most of them are on an individual subject basis, but some authorities impose a minimum requirement for the award of a certificate.

#### *The secondary school system*

146. It is evident that the pattern of secondary school examinations is as complex in Wales as it is in England. In order to arrive at a better understanding of the position it is essential to consider a little more fully the secondary school system in Wales. The intermediate schools, to which we have already referred, were, in the main, designed to provide a grammar school education,



though the original schemes made some reference to technical education which was, except to a very minor extent, never provided. Nevertheless, so great was the demand for secondary education in Wales that the admissions to these schools were in excess—in some cases far in excess—of what would now be regarded as an appropriate number, fitted by age, aptitude and ability, to receive a "grammar" type of education. In some areas this feature has persisted so that, even now, admission to grammar schools in Wales varies from about 20% to about 60% of the age group in various districts. With the progress of reorganisation, some of the old intermediate schools, particularly those where the percentage admission was already high, have become bilateral (grammar-modern) or even comprehensive, catering for the whole of the age group; others have retained much of their old character and range of admission.

147. These features give rise to two important points when we come to consider school examinations. In the first place it is clear that in grammar schools which admit a high percentage of the age group there must be a wide range of educational ability and, consequently, there must be in these schools a substantial number of pupils for whom the G.C.E. is not an appropriate examination. Secondly, as a result of the wide differences in the range of admission to grammar schools, the ability range in secondary modern schools in Wales varies considerably. Whereas all the secondary modern schools, in general, admit the lowest ranges of ability, they differ very substantially in the academic quality of their best pupils. It follows that in Wales, even more than in England, it is inappropriate to talk of an examination designed for pupils in secondary modern schools, and important that in discussing the suitability and appropriateness of secondary school examinations we should relate them not to types of schools but to types of pupils.

#### *The proposed new examination*

148. We have suggested elsewhere in this report that, roughly speaking, the G.C.E. O level is suitable for only the first 20% of pupils in terms of ability and have recommended the establishment of a new external examination designed with approximately the next 20% of the age group primarily in view. At the same time we envisage that a substantial number of pupils in a lower ability group would be able to take the examination in one or two subjects if they so wished.

149. We are aware that, whereas in England the proposed new examination would impinge mainly on secondary modern schools, in Wales it would be bound to impinge on other schools as well. It is evident that in a number of areas in Wales a substantial number of the pupils for whom the examination is primarily intended would be found in grammar schools; this would mean that some Welsh grammar schools would have to cope with two different external examinations. While this might cause some increase in administrative difficulties in the schools, some compensation for this should be found in the prospect that, for the first time ever, pupils in the lower ability groups in these schools would have an opportunity of taking an examination designed to meet their own particular needs.

150. And what of the secondary modern schools? It is clear that an examination designed as a standard examination for secondary modern schools of the orthodox type would not meet the needs of Wales. But it is not an examination of this kind which we are recommending. The examination which we have

in mind would be broad and flexible in its nature and would offer a wide choice of subjects and syllabuses; it would be largely under the control of teachers and would be intended not for any particular type of school but for pupils within a certain ability range. These safeguards should do much to remove the fears of those who have suggested that a new external examination would restrict the natural growth and freedom of development of the secondary modern schools in Wales.

151. In any consideration of secondary education in Wales, the problem of bilingualism occupies a prominent place. We understand that side by side with the growth of a bilingual policy in the primary schools there has been in recent years, at least in some parts of Wales, a distinct advance in the development of a more clearly defined pattern of bilingual education in the secondary schools. At the Ordinary level in the G.C.E., the Welsh Joint Education Committee now provides three types of papers in Welsh, intended for pupils for whom Welsh is, respectively, a first language, a second language or a foreign language. Arrangements are also being made for pupils who use Welsh as the medium for studying certain subjects to be examined in Welsh in those subjects. We are fully aware of the importance of ensuring that the introduction of a new examination will not hinder, but will, if possible, encourage these developments; we realise too the importance of an oral approach to the study of a language—especially a second or foreign language. With these considerations in mind we are of the opinion that the proposed new examination, if wisely used, would give opportunities for the encouragement of the teaching of Welsh, particularly in the anglicised areas of Wales. In so far as an examination can be held to have a stimulating effect on the teaching, and the learning, of a subject, it may well be that the provision of an examination in Welsh at a level lower than the G.C.E. O level would provide an effective fillip to the study of the Welsh language in the secondary schools. Furthermore, arrangements could no doubt be made for pupils who receive their education through the medium of Welsh to be examined through that medium if they so wished.

152. We have given much thought to these matters. As we have already indicated, the examination situation in Wales is as irregular and as diversified as that in England. We have recognised, too, that there are wide differences of opinion in Wales about the desirability of introducing a new examination; while some would welcome it, others would be strongly opposed to any kind of external examination for pupils for whom the G.C.E. is not suitable. Some of the evidence we have received has suggested that the present state of affairs should be allowed to continue for a further period in the hope that a more uniform and regularised examination pattern would gradually emerge. While we have some sympathy with this argument we do not find it any more compelling for Wales than for England. On the contrary, we have concluded that there is in Wales, as in England, and for the same reasons, an urgent need to bring about a more satisfactory and more coherent examination system. While we appreciate that secondary education in Wales differs in some important respects from its counterpart in England, we are convinced that these differences are not so great in kind or in size as to suggest that the solution to the problem of examinations in Wales should be different from that in England.

153. If, as we recommend, the proposed new examination is to be introduced

in Wales, careful thought will have to be given to the nature and constitution of the Examining Body (or Bodies) by whom it is to be conducted. This problem may be less difficult of solution in Wales than in England owing to the existence and nature of the Welsh Joint Education Committee. We would, however, emphasise our view that the criteria which we have set out in Chapter IV with regard to the nature and composition of the suggested new Examining Bodies are applicable to Wales as well as to England. In particular, we wish to state, quite clearly, that, in our opinion, an Examining Body (or an Examinations Sub-Committee) which is specially constituted to conduct examinations for the G.C.E. is not a suitable instrument for organising the proposed new examination. Nevertheless, it may be found that the Welsh Joint Education Committee, with its flexible arrangement of sub-committees to serve different educational purposes, can form a suitable basis for a new Examining Body (or Bodies). This is a question which Wales will have to settle for herself with the approval of the Minister.

## Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

154. The main conclusions and recommendations of our Report may be summarised as follows:

### A. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

#### *Chapter I.*

1. The history of the development of external examinations shows that for a century or more these have been found to have an important influence on the curriculum and the development of secondary education generally. Public commissions have repeatedly drawn attention to the dangers to the schools of an excessive and unco-ordinated growth of such examinations. The Secondary School Examinations Council itself owes its origin in part to the need to meet this problem (paragraphs 7-19).

2. The Education Act of 1944 gave rise to major new problems with regard to external examinations. With the great development of secondary education resulting from the Act, large numbers of children began to receive secondary education up to 15 years or over, for most of whom the traditional "grammar school" examination was not necessarily appropriate, even in the revised form proposed by the Norwood Committee (paragraphs 20-22).

3. The new G.C.E. examination planned by the Secondary School Examinations Council and brought into operation from 1951 did not provide a satisfactory answer for children in the ability range below those normally admitted to selective schools or streams. Though organised on a subject basis, the new examination, even at O level, was designed primarily for children aged 16 pursuing a "grammar" type of course. The Council's intention was that the examination requirements of schools catering for pupils in the ability ranges below these should be met by internal examinations, perhaps with some external assessment, together with objective tests and the extensive use of school records (paragraph 23).

4. But from the outset there was a demand for external examinations for the new kinds of non-selective schools. The growing evidence of this demand led the Minister in Circular 289 of July 1955, to state his objections to any

form of systematic external examination for secondary schools, whether nationally or privately organised, other than the G.C.E. This policy was modified in Circular 326 of July 1957, in the light of comments received on Circular 289, but only to the extent that the Minister agreed not to discourage regional examinations for 16-year-olds, where needed for selection for courses of further education (paragraphs 24-28).

#### *Chapter II.*

5. The G.C.E. O level examination, being regarded as the main route to higher education or professional status, has attracted a steadily increasing number of entrants, not only from grammar schools and streams but from all kinds of secondary schools and institutions of further education. By 1959 about one-third of all O level entries were from establishments other than grammar schools; entrants from modern schools have increased rapidly in recent years (paragraphs 29-32).

6. Nevertheless, G.C.E. O level is widely regarded as unsuitable for all but a very limited group of pupils in non-selective schools and streams. There has been a parallel growth in entries for other kinds of external examinations, some organised locally by local groups of teachers or local education authorities, others organised regionally or nationally by independent Examining Bodies. Many of these developments have occurred in face of the Minister's discouragement (paragraphs 33-52).

7. Our review of the examinations of some of the more important of these Bodies leads us to conclude that, while some of these examinations may have advantages for the schools and valuable work is being done, many of them exhibit important defects, and, taken as a whole, they are likely to have undesirable effects on the teaching and curriculum of the schools (paragraphs 53-63).

8. The numbers taking these examinations are growing rapidly, and there is every indication that they will continue to grow, and that the individual Bodies conducting them will also grow in size and influence. A position is likely to be reached before long in which the work of external examining below G.C.E. level will be almost exclusively concentrated in the hands of a limited group of Bodies, in danger of becoming increasingly remote from the schools, and able to pursue their own policies without reference to the long-term needs of the schools or of the educational system as a whole. This situation contains very real dangers for the schools (paragraphs 64-66).

#### *Chapter III.*

9. Almost all the arguments of the Norwood Committee both for and against external examinations can be shown to apply in the present context. The arguments against external examinations appear to apply with special force to those taken at the age of 15 or under (paragraphs 67-84).

10. Assuming that it is not feasible to prohibit all external examinations other than the G.C.E., the Minister is confronted with the choice either of allowing the existing examinations to develop unchecked, or of taking the initiative in providing or stimulating the provision of examinations conforming to stated requirements (paragraphs 85-90).

11. Our study of the arguments has led us to the conclusion that, despite the dangers, external examinations below the G.C.E. level can make a con-

structive contribution to the educational process provided certain conditions are fulfilled, and we are convinced that the right course is for the Minister to take the initiative (paragraphs 91-95).

12. Moreover, we believe that nothing would be gained, and much might be lost, by allowing a further waiting period for further inquiry and experiment. Our unanimous recommendation is that the Minister should take the initiative at an early date in stimulating and if necessary assisting the formation of Examining Bodies to provide suitable examinations (paragraphs 96 and 97).

#### *Chapter IV.*

13. We are agreed that the needs of the present situation would not be met by:

- (a) external examinations designed for 15-year-old pupils (paragraph 98);
- (b) examinations conducted by local Bodies (paragraph 99);
- (c) external examinations designed for students attending part-time courses of further education (paragraph 100);
- (d) a widely extended use of the G.C.E. O level examination at its present standard, or the introduction of a new sub-O level of the G.C.E. examination (paragraphs 101-106).

#### B. RECOMMENDATIONS

14. Any new pattern of examinations, if they are to play a constructive role, and their potential dangers minimised, should conform to certain criteria, namely those numbered (i) to (vi) below (paragraph 109).

- (i) The examinations should be appropriate for pupils at the end of the fifth year of a secondary school course, when they will normally be aged about 16, and candidates should not be admitted before the age of about 15 years 9 months (paragraph 110).
- (ii) Assuming that up to 20% of the total 16-year-old age group may be expected to attempt G.C.E. O level in four or more subjects, we think the examinations we propose might be taken in four or more subjects by candidates in the next 20% below these, and should be so designed that a substantial majority of pupils within this group would obtain passes in this range of subjects. We think that up to a further 20% of the age-group might attempt individual subjects. There should be both pass and credit standards (paragraphs 111-113).
- (iii) They should be on a subject and not a group basis (paragraph 114).
- (iv) They should be specially designed to suit the needs and interests of pupils in the ability range concerned and should not simply provide a replica of G.C.E. examinations at a lower level (paragraph 115).
- (v) They should be largely in the hands of teachers serving in the schools which will use them. General responsibility for the examinations should be in the hands of about 20 regional Examining Bodies, on whose Governing Councils there should be representatives of teachers serving in the region, local education authorities, further education institutions, Area Training Organisations and employers. Schools should normally make

use of the Examining Body appropriate for their area; Examining Bodies should normally accept only candidates entered by schools. The conduct of the examinations should be delegated in each case to a committee composed mainly of serving teachers, who should be advised on syllabuses and papers in particular subjects by panels of teachers from schools using the examinations (paragraphs 116-120).

(vi) The Examining Bodies should act under the general guidance of the central consultative body described in sub-paragraphs 19-20 below.

15. We propose that the Minister should invite applications from intending Examining Bodies. We assume that initiatives would come from groups of teachers, local education authorities and others in the regions concerned (paragraph 121).

16. Applications from existing Examining Bodies in respect of a limited geographical area should not be ruled out if the Bodies were prepared to reconstitute themselves so as to satisfy the above criteria for the purpose of conducting these examinations (paragraph 122).

17. Fees paid to examiners should be sufficiently attractive to facilitate the recruitment of suitable examiners, and Examining Bodies should be able to look to schools and local education authorities to make a positive contribution by encouraging and helping teachers to do this work (paragraph 123).

18. To ensure that the examination results have general recognition, it should be sufficient for the Minister to satisfy himself that the Examining Bodies conformed to the criteria, that a particular examination was suitable, that marking schemes and general arrangements were fair and efficient, and the results reasonably consistent with those of similar Bodies (paragraphs 124-125).

19. There should be a central consultative body to co-ordinate the activity of the Examining Bodies and to promote research and experiment. This should be associated with the Secondary School Examinations Council, of which it might be a Standing Committee. We venture to suggest that the Council might require some measure of enlargement to deal with this extension of its responsibilities (paragraph 126).

20. The consultative body should have the assistance of a small but highly qualified research and development group (paragraph 127).

21. The Minister should be invited to subsidise the initial capital outlay of the Examining Bodies, perhaps by the payment of headquarters' grants, but when the Bodies are fully operative, they may be expected to become self-supporting. Examination fees for candidates from maintained schools would continue to be paid by local education authorities (paragraph 128).

## *Chapter V.*

22. The examinations should normally be held in May (preceding the G.C.E. examination). The results should be endorsed on certificates awarded to candidates, in the form of passes or credits, with the signature of the Chairman and Secretary of the Examining Body. The certificates should be known as Secondary School Certificates of the Examining Body concerned (paragraph 129).

23. While the results should prove useful to employers, it is hoped that employers will pay careful attention to the information provided on the certifi-

cates, and also that they will treat them as only one piece of evidence amongst others, notably school records (paragraph 130).

24. The results should also prove useful to principals of technical colleges and others concerned with selection for further education courses, enabling them better to decide how to allocate candidates to appropriate courses. It is hoped that these users also would regard the examinations as providing only one piece of evidence amongst others (paragraphs 131-135).

#### *Chapter VI.*

25. While the secondary school system in Wales is in some important respects different from that which exists in England, there are the same compelling reasons for introducing, in addition to the G.C.E. examination, a more satisfactory examination system; and there are no strong grounds for believing that the solution to the problem of examinations in Wales should be different from that proposed for England (paragraphs 146-152).

26. While an Examining Body or Sub-Committee which is specially constituted to conduct G.C.E. examinations is not a suitable instrument for organising the examinations now proposed, it is possible that, without departing from the criteria for approved Examining Bodies as mentioned above, the Welsh Joint Education Committee, with its flexible arrangement of sub-committees to serve different educational purposes, could provide a suitable basis for the new Examining Body, or Bodies, for Wales (paragraph 153).

(Signed)

Robert Beloe (Chairman)

W. P. Alexander

Edward Britton

C. E. Dodgson

Olave M. Hastings

Alec Hay

H. Wyn Jones

G. Wenninger

C. W. Morris

K. W. Morris

} Joint Secretaries.

## Extract from Report of the Consultative Committee, 1911

The following is quoted from the beginning of Chapter IV of the 1911 Report of the Consultative Committee on Examinations in Secondary Schools.

"... it will be convenient if we summarise what we believe to be the more important effects of examinations (1) on the pupil, (2) on the teacher.

- (1) The good effects of examinations on the pupil are (a) that they make him work up to time by requiring him to reach a stated degree of knowledge by a fixed date; (b) that they incite him to get his knowledge into reproducible form and to lessen the risk of vagueness; (c) that they make him work at parts of a study which, though important, may be uninteresting or repugnant to him personally; (d) that they train the power of getting up a subject for a definite purpose, even though it may not appear necessary to remember it afterwards—a training which is useful for parts of the professional duty of the lawyer, the administrator, the journalist, and the man of business; (e) that in some cases they encourage a certain steadiness of work over a long period of time; and (f) that they enable the pupil to measure his real attainment (i) by the standard required by outside examiners, (ii) by comparison with the attainments of his fellow pupils, and (iii) by comparison with the attainments of his contemporaries in other schools.

On the other hand, examinations may have a bad effect upon the pupil's mind (a) by setting a premium on the power of merely reproducing other people's ideas and other people's methods of presentment, thus diverting energy from the creative process; (b) by rewarding evanescent forms of knowledge; (c) by favouring a somewhat passive type of mind; (d) by giving an undue advantage to those who, in answering questions on paper, can cleverly make the best use of, perhaps, slender attainments; (e) by inducing the pupil, in his preparation for an examination, to aim rather at absorbing information imparted to him by the teacher than at forming an independent judgment upon the subjects in which he receives instruction; and (f) by stimulating the competitive (and, at its worst, a mercenary) spirit in the acquisition of knowledge.

- (2) The good effects of well-conducted examinations upon the teacher are (a) that they induce him to treat his subject thoroughly; (b) that they make him so arrange his lessons as to cover with intellectual thoroughness a prescribed course of study within appointed limits of time; (c) that they impel him to pay attention not only to his best pupils, but also to the backward and the slower amongst those who are being prepared for the examination; and (d) that they make him acquainted with the standard which other teachers and their pupils are able to reach in the same subject in other places of education. On the other hand, the effects of examinations on the teacher are bad (a) in so far as they constrain him to watch the examiner's foibles and to note his idiosyncrasies (or the tradition of the examination) in order that he may arm his pupils with the kind of knowledge required for dealing successfully with the questions that will probably be put to them; (b) in so far as they limit the freedom of the teacher in choosing the way in which he shall treat his subject; (c) in so far as they encourage him to take upon himself work which had better be left to the largely unaided efforts of his pupils, causing him to impart information to them in too digested a form or to select for them groups of facts or aspects of the subject which each pupil should properly be left to collect or envisage for himself; (d) in so far as they



predispose the teacher to overvalue among his pupils that type of mental development which secures success in examinations; (e) in so far as they make it the teacher's interest to excel in the purely examinable side of his professional work and divert his attention from those parts of education which cannot be tested by the process of examination.

It will be seen that the dangers of examinations, and especially of external examinations, are considerable in their possible effect both on pupil and on teacher. We have no hesitation, however, in stating our conviction that external examinations are not only necessary but desirable in Secondary Schools. But we are equally convinced that if the admitted advantages of external examinations are to be secured and the dangers of them minimised, such examinations should be subjected to most stringent regulations as to their number, the age at which they are taken, and their general character."

## Summary of relevant recommendations of the Norwood Report, 1943

In 1943, a Committee of the Secondary School Examinations Council under the Chairmanship of Sir Cyril Norwood reported on the "Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools." Their main recommendations on examinations were:

### *The School Certificate Examination*

1. In the interest of the individual child and of the increased freedom and responsibility of the teaching profession change in the School Certificate Examination should be in the direction of making the examination entirely internal, that is to say, conducted by the teachers at the school on syllabuses and papers framed by themselves.
2. For a transitional period of seven years the examination should (a) continue to be carried out by existing University Examining Bodies, but should be conducted in each case by a Sub-Committee containing strong representation of teachers; (b) become a "subject" examination, pupils taking whatever subjects they wish to take. A certificate stating the performance of the pupil should be given to each candidate; to this statement should be added by the school authorities an account of the pupil's school record.
3. At the end of the transitional period the decision should be made whether conditions make possible a change to a wholly internal examination, or whether there should be a further transitional period in which teachers would take still greater control of the examination, and the Universities still less.

### *An Examination Taken Normally at 18+*

4. To meet the requirements of University Entrance, of entry into the professions and other needs, a School Leaving Examination should be conducted twice each year for pupils of 18+. Pupils should take in this examination the subjects required for their particular purpose in view. Its purpose should not be to provide evidence of a "general" or "all-round" education.

### *University Scholarships*

5. The present Higher School Certificate Examination should be abolished and State and Local Education Authority scholarships should be awarded on a different basis.
6. The winning of a College scholarship at Oxford or Cambridge or a University scholarship elsewhere should constitute a claim upon public funds for assistance towards the cost of living at the University, subject to evidence of need.
7. For the award of State and Local Education Authority scholarships an examination should be held in March by the University Examining Bodies; the recommendations of Examining Bodies would be made to Local Education Authorities and would be reviewed by special boards appointed for the

purpose, who would take into account performance in the examination and the school records of the candidates. The final award should be made by the State, which should bear the cost of scholarships. The value of the scholarships should be such as to enable the holder to take full part in the life of the University. It should be open to Local Education Authorities to make awards to candidates to assist them at Universities or other places of advanced education; the State should pay half the cost of such awards.

8. The proposals made with regard to the examination taken at 18+ and the examinations for State and Local Education Authority awards should be put into operation as soon as possible.

## Summary of First Report of the Secondary School Examinations Council, 1947

The main recommendations of the 1947 Report of the Secondary School Examinations Council were:

1. Every pupil on leaving a secondary school should be provided with a comprehensive school report containing the fullest possible positive information about him and his abilities and potentialities.
2. Objective tests of various kinds should be set periodically within the secondary school and the results recorded in school records and used to assist in guiding pupils towards suitable courses of study or types of employment.
3. (a) Individual secondary schools should carry out systematic internal examinations based on and designed to suit the particular courses and the pupils following them.  
(b) The Ministry and Local Education Authorities (singly or in groups) should promote and encourage experiments in the conduct and assessment of internal examinations:  
e.g. (i) through the association of teachers from neighbouring schools or areas in the setting and marking of examination papers;  
(ii) through external assessment on wider lines by appropriate assessors.
4. An examination at "Ordinary," "Advanced" and "Scholarship" levels should be available each year to candidates who are at least sixteen on September 1st. The minimum age should be raised, and the standard required at the "Ordinary" level should be appropriately adjusted, when circumstances permit.
5. All subjects at all these levels should be purely optional.
6. A "General Certificate of Education" should be awarded showing the subjects (and the level—"Ordinary" or "Advanced"—in each subject) in which the candidate has satisfied the examiners.
7. The examinations should be held at such a time as will enable the results to be communicated to the Ministry by August 1st.
8. The new system of external examinations should be introduced in 1950.

## Summary of relevant recommendations of the Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1959

In 1959, the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) under the Chairmanship of Sir Geoffrey Crowther reported on the education of boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 18. Their recommendations on extended courses and external examinations in modern schools, in Chapter 8 of their Report, were:

1. Many, probably more than half, of the pupils of the modern schools would have their education deflected from its proper lines by being prepared for an external examination. It is important that attention to the needs of the minority of abler pupils should not be allowed to lead to neglect of the interests of these boys and girls, who are and will remain by far the largest single group in the modern schools. All our other recommendations in Chapter 8 are subject to this.
2. In the examinable minority, two groups can be distinguished. One of these consists of those boys and girls who have the ability to attempt some of the subjects in the G.C.E. at Ordinary level. It is important that none of them should be denied the opportunity to do so.
3. There remains another group—consisting of about one-third or rather more of the pupils in modern schools over the age of 15—for whom external examinations below the level of the G.C.E. may serve a useful purpose, and official policy should be modified to recognise this.
4. We are, however, impressed with the dangers of large-scale external examinations, which a national system could not avoid. External examinations should therefore develop on a regional, or preferably a local, basis. Experiments on these lines should continue for a period of about five years, and a further inquiry should be held into their results, before any decision is taken concerning the creation of a national system.
5. There is also need for further experience and inquiry before a judgment can be expressed on the relative advantages of subject examinations and group examinations.
6. Some of the purposes served by an external examination can also be met by a formal assessment by the school, at the time of leaving, of a pupil's performance and attainments during his whole time at the school. Irrespective of the growth of external examinations, we recommend that thought should be given to the development of a system of leaving certificates on these lines. This also, in our view, can best be organised locally or regionally, not nationally.
7. There is no case, except as a temporary measure in a few localities, for an external examination at the end of the fourth year—that is, at the age of 15. Where such examinations exist, they should be purely local.
8. Examinations designed for part-time students should not be taken in secondary schools.

APPENDIX 5  
(see paragraph 24)

## Statistics showing increase of entries for the G.C.E. Examination at Ordinary level

The following table shows the number of subject entries in the summer examinations for the Ordinary level of the G.C.E. examination, and the number and percentage of those who were successful. (Entries and passes are shown to the nearest 100 only.)

*G.C.E. entries and results in individual subjects at Ordinary level*

Year	Boys			Girls			Boys and Girls		
	Number of entries	Passes		Number of entries	Passes		Number of entries	Passes	
		Number	%		Number	%		Number	%
1951	398,500	218,200	54.8	340,200	208,800	61.4	738,700	427,000	57.8
1952	*453,500	*258,500	57.0	*376,200	*236,200	62.8	829,700	494,700	59.6
1953	544,900	316,800	58.1	434,800	275,000	63.2	979,800	591,800	60.4
1954	*540,300	*315,500	58.4	*444,000	*287,700	64.8	984,200	603,200	61.3
1955	581,100	335,600	57.8	462,700	295,700	63.9	1,043,900	631,300	60.5
1956	593,100	341,700	57.6	475,800	303,900	63.9	1,068,800	645,600	60.4
1957	631,200	363,200	57.5	497,200	312,200	62.8	1,128,400	675,400	59.9
1958	712,200	400,500	56.2	562,500	347,700	61.8	1,274,800	748,200	58.7
1959	810,600	452,900	55.9	639,400	394,800	61.8	1,450,000	847,700	58.5

\*In respect of 1952 and 1954 the separate figures for Boys and Girls taking the Local Examinations of the Oxford Delegacy have been estimated.

## APPENDIX 6

(see paragraphs 33, 48, 74)

Statistical tables derived from replies to  
questionnaire to schools

1. In June 1959, a questionnaire on examinations was sent to a stratified random sample of all kinds of maintained secondary schools in England and Wales.

2. These schools were asked to state what examinations (other than routine internal examinations) had been taken during 1957 or 1958 by pupils in a specific birth-group (i.e. those born in 1942) who were attending the school at the beginning of 1959 or who had attended it during the previous two years.

3. The following tables have been based on the information received from those schools in the sample that replied. In the tables, unless the context otherwise requires, "pupils" or "candidates" means pupils born in 1942, "examinations" means examinations taken in 1957 or 1958, and "schools" means "schools in the sample which replied to the questionnaire."

4. For clarity, the schools have been grouped into broad classifications. "Modern" includes a few central schools and "other secondary" schools; "grammar" includes grammar-technical bilateral schools, and "comprehensive" includes multilateral and other bilateral schools.

5. *Table 1* shows the number of schools of various kinds in the sample from which replies were received and the external examinations taken by their pupils. The totals of columns 4 to 7 given in column 8 exceed the number of schools shown in column 2, because in columns 4 to 7 the schools have been included once for each examination taken in each school. Thus a school may appear in more than one of columns 4 to 7, or more than once in the same column. The single grammar school which is shown as not taking examinations is in fact a new school with only one pupil born in 1942.

6. *Table 2* illustrates on a cumulative basis the growth in the number of external examinations taken by pupils at the 272 schools in the sample from whom replies were received. No account has been taken of the varying response to the questionnaire from different types of school. Each examination taken by a school is included separately in the table. Where the date of first entry is unknown, the examination has been excluded from the cumulative figures.

7. *Table 3* gives the percentage of schools entering candidates for external examinations. The top row of the Table could alternatively be written:

	Percentage taking G.C.E.	Percentage not taking G.C.E.	Percentage total
Taking other examinations —	21	25	46
Not taking other examinations	5	49	54
Total —	26	74	100

and so also for the other rows.

8. *Table 4* shows the number and percentage of pupils in different types of

schools entering for external examinations. In this and the following table, the statistics extracted from the replies to the questionnaire to schools have been scaled up to show the estimated number of entries throughout the country, and the number of pupils has therefore been shown to the nearest 100. Pupils who have been entered for more than one examination in 1957 or 1958 have been included in the table (column 4 or 6) once in respect of each examination.

9. *Table 5* shows the numbers and percentages of pupils entering for the G.C.E. examination, and the degree of success they achieved. The statistics obtained from the sample replies have been scaled up to show figures on a national basis. Each pupil entering for the G.C.E. examination in 1957 or 1958 has been included once only. Many of the pupils in the 1942 birth-group will have entered for the G.C.E. examination in 1959 or later, but the schools were not asked to provide information about these later examinations.

10. *Table 6*. This table gives the head teachers' estimate of the effect of external examinations on school leaving.



TABLE 1.—Analysis of external examinations taken by schools in the sample replying to the questionnaire.

Line number	Type of school	Schools			Entries for external examinations				
		in the sample, replying to the questionnaire	taking external examinations analysed in columns (4) to (8)	planning to introduce examinations, but not included in column (2)	G.C.E.	other external examinations intended for secondary school pupils	other external examinations intended for further education students	other external examinations for special purposes	Total columns (4) to (7)
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	ENGLAND								
2	Modern	150	76	49	38	49	26	34	147
3	Grammar	65	64	1	64	2	1	26	93
4	Technical	12	11	1	9	2	4	3	18
5	Comprehensive	11	11	—	9	2	5	6	22
6	WALES								
7	Modern	14	10	3	1	10	3	2	16
8	Grammar	16	16	—	16	—	2	1	19
9	Comprehensive	4	3	1	2	1	1	1	5

TABLE 2.—Growth in the number of external examinations taken by pupils in schools replying to the questionnaire.

Line number	Type of examination	Date of first entry unknown*	Entries for examinations by schools, shown cumulatively												
			1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
1	G.C.E. (or its predecessors)	16	78	78	79	80	80	85	87	89	95	102	107	111	123
	Other external examinations designed for:—														
2	Secondary school pupils	12	—	—	—	2	3	3	5	8	10	12	23	32	54
3	Further education students	8	1	1	2	3	3	3	4	9	14	21	25	30	34
4	Special purposes	28	17	17	17	17	18	20	25	26	29	29	31	36	45
5	Total (lines 1-4)	64	96	96	98	102	104	111	121	132	148	164	186	209	256

\*Figures in this column have not been included in the cumulative totals.

TABLE 3.—Percentage of schools entering candidates for external examinations.

Line number	Type of school	Percentage of schools entering candidates for:—				
		Any external examination	G.C.E.	Other external examinations	Both G.C.E. and other examinations	No external examination
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	ENGLAND					
1	Modern	51	26	46	21	49
2	Grammar	98	98	29	29	2
3	Technical	92	75	42	25	8
4	Comprehensive	100	82	73	55	—
5	Total (England)	65	46	43	24	35
	WALES					
6	Modern	71	7	64	—	29
7	Grammar	100	100	19	19	—
8	Comprehensive	75	50	50	25	25
9	Total (Wales)	81	40	49	8	19

TABLE 4.—Analysis of pupils entering for any external examination, based on the sample.

Line number	Type of school	Pupils						
		In the birth-group	in schools entering candidates	(2) as a percentage of (1)	taking examinations in 1957	(4) as a percentage of (1)	taking examinations in 1958	(6) as a percentage of (1)
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	ENGLAND							
1	Modern	322,802	174,500	54.1	26,700	8.3	30,800	9.5
2	Grammar	90,761	90,700	99.9	5,800	6.4	57,300	63.1
3	Technical	24,224	23,600	97.5	2,400	9.9	12,000	49.6
4	Comprehensive	18,807	18,800	100.0	2,700	14.4	5,000	26.6
5	Total (England)	456,594	307,600	67.4	37,600	8.2	105,100	23.0
	WALES							
6	Modern	18,036	13,600	75.4	2,560	14.2	1,780	9.9
7	Grammar	9,360	9,360	100.0	530	5.7	4,980	53.2
8	Comprehensive	3,665	3,110	85.0	100	2.7	350	9.6
9	Total (Wales)	31,061	26,070	83.9	3,190	10.3	7,110	22.9

TABLE 5.—Analysis of pupils entering the G.C.E. examination and the extent of their success, based on the sample.

Line number	Type of school	Pupils					Subject passes			
		in all schools	in schools entering candidates in 1957 or 1958	(2) as a percentage of (1)	who were candidates in 1957 or 1958	(4) as a percentage of (1)	Total	per pupil in the birth-group	per pupil in schools entering candidates	per candidate
	ENGLAND	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1	Modern	322,802	91,700	28.4	11,200	3.5	25,800	.1	.3	2.3
2	Grammar	90,761	90,700	99.9	60,600	66.8	252,200	2.8	2.8	4.2
3	Technical	24,224	20,600	85.1	9,600	39.7	29,500	1.2	1.4	3.1
4	Comprehensive	18,807	14,500	77.7	4,300	22.9	9,900	.5	.7	2.3
5	Total (England)	456,594	217,500	47.5	85,700	18.8	317,400	.7	1.5	3.7
6	WALES									
	Modern	18,036	920	5.1	140	.7	240	—	.3	1.7
7	Grammar	9,360	9,360	100.0	5,500	58.8	24,400	2.6	2.6	4.4
8	Comprehensive	3,665	2,760	75.4	240	6.6	1,120	.3	.4	4.7
9	Total (Wales)	31,061	13,040	42.0	5,880	18.9	25,760	.8	.2	4.4

TABLE 6.—Head teachers' estimates of the effect of examinations other than the G.C.E. on the length of pupils' school life.

Line number	Type of School	Schools concerned	Increase	No change	Decrease	Unknown
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	ENGLAND					
	Modern	69	52	9	—	8
2	Grammar	19	2	10	3	4
3	Technical	8	6	2	—	—
4	Comprehensive	8	8	—	—	—
5	WALES					
	Modern	9	9	—	—	—
6	Grammar	3	1	1	—	1
7	Comprehensive	2	2	—	—	—

## Specialist examinations

1. The following "specialist" examinations, limited in their scope or purpose, may be taken by pupils in maintained secondary schools, in addition to the examinations of a more general nature conducted by the London-based and regional examining bodies (summarised in paragraphs 42-46) and the examinations conducted by local bodies.

*Examinations for girls*

2. The *National Council for Domestic Studies* began in 1919 a series of examinations for secondary school pupils and further education students. Examinations specially designed for secondary school pupils are those for:

- (a) the Junior Homecraft Certificate;
- (b) the Junior Needlework Certificate, which may be taken in two stages, one at about the age of 14 and the second two years later;
- (c) the Preliminary Housecraft Certificate, which is comparable to the G.C.E. Ordinary level, and
- (d) the Housecraft Certificate, which covers a wide range of domestic science subjects.

Schools may submit their own syllabuses, provided that they include basic subject matter prescribed by the National Council. Examinations in cookery and needlework may be taken separately. Course work is taken into consideration in the award of certificates.

3. The *National Association for Maternal and Child Welfare* introduced examinations in simple mothercraft in 1928. Girls of any age may enter, and a certificate is awarded to candidates reaching the required standard in a theoretical paper and practical test.

4. Part I of *The General Nursing Council's* preliminary examination covering elementary anatomy and physiology, and personal and communal health, may be taken by candidates from secondary schools and further education establishments following a one or two years' pre-nursing course approved by the Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Education. These courses, established in 1939, combine subjects of general education with professional subjects, but the Council examines only the latter. A pass in an appropriate G.C.E. subject exempts a candidate from Part I of the Preliminary examination.

*Examinations for boys*

5. The three armed services conduct entry examinations for apprentices between the ages of 15 and 17 (exceptionally up to 17½). All these examinations may be taken by candidates at schools, and exemption may be obtained by passes in the appropriate subjects of the G.C.E. examination or any other of equivalent standard.

6. The *Admiralty* has held examinations for artificer apprentices since 1903, the examinations consisting of papers in mathematics, science and English,

an essay and a general paper. Candidates must reach the desired standard in mathematics, science and the examination as a whole. In 1950 the Admiralty took over similar examinations for dockyard apprentices.

7. The *Air Ministry* has conducted since 1919 a qualifying examination for apprentices, in mathematics, science, and English and general papers. Candidates must reach a minimum standard in mathematics and in the examination as a whole, but the pass standard varies each year in relation to the recruiting needs of the Royal Air Force.

8. The *War Office* conducts an examination in English and arithmetic, with optional papers in science and mathematics, for entry to the army apprentice scheme.

#### *Examinations for girls and boys*

9. The *Pitman Examinations Institute* was established in 1912. It holds examinations for both secondary school pupils and further education students. Candidates have a choice of 22 subjects, mainly of a commercial nature but including three foreign languages. Each subject may be taken separately, and in many cases may be examined at elementary, intermediate or advanced stages.

10. These examinations are distinct from the commercial examinations conducted by *Pitmans College* since 1898, which are restricted to full- and part-time students at the branches of the College.

#### *Subject examinations*

11. The *Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music* has conducted examinations since 1889 in the practice and theory of music, and in speech and drama. The eight grades of examination are open to students irrespective of age.

12. The *Royal Drawing Society* introduced in 1890 graded examinations in drawing and painting which are also available to students of all ages. Alternatively, a candidate may obtain a certificate from the Society by submitting course work for assessment.

13. The *Conference of Catholic Colleges* and the *Association of Convent Schools* hold an examination in Roman Catholic doctrine for the award of a School Religious Certificate, which is provided as an alternative to the religious knowledge papers of the G.C.E. examination.

14. Mention should also be made of swimming tests conducted by *The Royal Life Saving Society* and of first aid tests conducted by the *St. John Ambulance Brigade* and by the *British Red Cross Society*. These may all lead to the award of a certificate to successful candidates, but the courses and tests may sometimes be held out of school hours.

## Suggestions illustrating principles on which examinations might be designed

In *Chapter II*, we offered comments on a number of the examinations provided by the existing Examining Bodies, as a result of a survey made with the help of the Council's expert advisers on individual subjects. In this appendix we set out, for purposes of illustration, suggestions which have come to us from the same source as to the lines on which examinations of the kind which we have in mind might be constructed, in two important subjects, namely, English and Handicraft. We put these forward as a basis for further discussion, particularly by teachers who will be concerned with these examinations.

### *English*

(i) There are special difficulties in reconciling the usual techniques of an external examination in English at the age of 16 with the new methods of teaching which are developing. These methods represent not something vague and undisciplined but a very real discipline which is already being practised in many schools.

(ii) It is suggested therefore that the written part of the examination in tested subjectively. Hitherto no successful method of objective testing has been devised. The Report of the Central Advisory Council, "15 to 18", contains this passage which we find particularly relevant to English :

"In practical subjects the right teaching approach does not lie through a series of graduated exercises standing by themselves, which is what a large-scale examination tends to encourage, however much the examiners may wish to discourage it."

Over much of its range English is, or should be, intensely practical.

(iii) It is suggested therefore that the written part of the examination in English should consist of continuous writing, some of it related to what has been read and of nothing more. It should take account of the fact that where the pupil is "involved" his control of language is surer.

(iv) Concentration on mere "grammar", vocabulary exercises and other linguistic snippets should be discouraged in the examinations.

(v) We should expect the subjects set for continuous writing to aim at allowing the candidate to write from experience, interest and conviction. He should not be required to write about tasks which, though simple, never become his own purposes and never involve him deeply.

(vi) A good deal of imagination is required in finding suitable material for comprehension which will "involve" the candidate and call for imaginative treatment by him. We should expect the questions to test the quality of his response, and not to be mere pegs on which to hang tests of vocabulary, figurative usage and the like.

(vii) One method of securing subjective marking of compositions, which is in use in several eleven-plus examinations, is that in which four markers rapidly assess each composition by general impression alone, and the candi-

date's mark is the sum of the four marks. Markers are selected for their self-consistency on a mark/re-mark test; differences between markers are not regarded as detrimental, the principle being that four subjective responses are more valid than one. (British Journal of Educational Psychology Vol. 19, Pt. III, 1949, pp. 200-209.)

(viii) It is desirable that, to prevent the coaching of weaker candidates in stereotyped papers, there should be considerable variation in the form of papers from year to year; and therefore that the syllabus should state its requirements fully.

(ix) The supplementing of the written examination by an oral test, such as already exists in some local examinations, requires further careful study.

### *Handicraft*

(i) The educational value of the handicraft course derives less from learning the use of basic tools and materials than from the more individual work which follows. The first stage is largely a matter of technical instruction; the creative stage is reached when a pupil can conceive, plan and execute some task which is fresh and is pitched at a level which demands thought as well as skill.

(ii) We suggest therefore that new types of syllabus and questions should be devised which would further the particular aims of this examination, and that these aims might be with advantage set out clearly, with a warning against mere rote learning.

(iii) We should prefer to see syllabuses less detailed than some of those now existing, and framed in terms of what is commonly done in schools and is within the actual experience of pupils, excluding facts and processes of which they can have knowledge only from books or notes.

(iv) In testing theory, attempts to make questions difficult or worthy may encourage superficial treatment or the mere repetition of statements or sketches learnt by rote. Questions on theory would be of value provided that they called for some exercise of judgment based upon workshop experience reinforced by reading.

(v) In practical work, we should prefer to see simple tests, wholly within the grasp of most candidates, so that examiners could mark for quality, method and accuracy.

(vi) It would be appropriate to introduce some test of how to read a drawing and to project a simple view; but this ought not to occupy too much examination time nor bear too high a proportion of the marks. We believe that no craft examination is complete without a sketching test. The examiner is interested in two aspects: the candidate's proficiency in sketching and the facts which he records. It might be best to separate these two requirements and have one question in which marks were given for the quality of the sketching, while in other answers the candidates might sketch more quickly and simply, gaining marks for correct identification and especially proportion.

(vii) On practical grounds, after consideration, we reject the suggestion that actual "course work" should be seen by the examiners.

*(see paragraph 117)*

## Regional organisation of examinations

The following table gives suggestions as a basis for discussion of a possible regional distribution of Examining Bodies, on the assumptions indicated in Chapter IV, namely:

- (i) that there will eventually be need for about 20 Examining Bodies;
- (ii) that each of these should cover approximately 200-300 schools;
- (iii) that they should cover reasonably compact geographical areas, with satisfactory internal communications;
- (iv) that the area of a particular Body should be conterminous with the area of a particular local education authority.

BODY	APPROXIMATE AREA ( <i>in terms of geographical counties</i> )
1. NORTHERN	Durham, Northumberland.
2. YORKSHIRE I	York East Riding, York North Riding, parts of York West Riding.
3. YORKSHIRE II	Parts of York West Riding.
4. NORTH-WEST I	North Lancashire, Cumberland, Westmorland.
5. NORTH-WEST II	West Lancashire, parts of Cheshire.
6. NORTH-WEST III	East Lancashire, parts of Cheshire and Derby.
7. MIDLANDS I	Parts of Derby, Lincoln Lindsey, Nottingham.
8. MIDLANDS II	Salop, parts of Cheshire and Stafford.
9. MIDLANDS III	Warwick, parts of Stafford.
10. MIDLANDS IV	Bedford, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Isle of Ely, Leicester, Lincoln Holland and Kesteven, Northampton, Soke of Peterborough, Rutland.
11. EAST ANGLIA	Norfolk, Suffolk, parts of Essex and Hertford.
12. LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES I	Parts of North-east London and Essex.
13. LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES II	Parts of North-west London, Buckingham, Hertford and Middlesex.



- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 14. LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES III | Parts of South-east London, Kent and Sussex.                                     |
| 15. LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES IV  | Parts of South London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex.                                  |
| 16. LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES V   | Parts of South-west London, Berks, Middlesex and Surrey.                         |
| 17. SOUTHERN                     | Parts of Berks, Buckingham, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Oxford, Dorset and Sussex. |
| 18. SOUTH-WEST                   | Gloucester, Hereford, Wilts, Worcester.  |
| 19. WEST COUNTRY                 | Cornwall, Devon, Isles of Scilly, Somerset, parts of Dorset.                     |
| 20. (and possibly 21.) WALES     |  |

## Estimated cost of conducting a "regional" Examining Body

1. The cost of conducting a regional Examining Body such as we propose will be affected by such factors as the number of its candidates and centres, the geographical area it covers, and the origin of the Examining Body. A distinction must also be drawn between the Body's running costs in the initial stages when its potential is not fully used, and those likely to be incurred when the Body is dealing with the maximum number of candidates and centres that can be administered effectively in accordance with the criteria which we propose in Chapter IV.

*Establishment of an Examining Body*

2. The initial cost will be partly determined by the way in which the Examining Body is established. If an existing Examining Body should be approved for the purpose in respect of one of the proposed regions, we expect that the costs of establishment will be light, since many of the administrative facilities such as office accommodation may already be available. Where, however, an entirely new Examining Body has to be established, there may well be heavy initial expenditure to be met from loan.

3. We have studied the costs of certain existing Examining Bodies, and in the light of these and of other information an attempt has been made in the following tables to arrive at a very rough estimate of the income and expenditure of an Examining Body on certain assumptions. It has been assumed that candidates will enter on an average for  $4\frac{1}{2}$  subjects each; that the fees charged will be 15s. per candidate plus 10s. per subject entry; provision of up to two papers in each subject has been allowed for to be on the safe side (though we do not suggest that this is normally desirable); and we have assumed that the fees paid to examiners will need to be higher than those normally paid by non-G.C.E. Bodies. We have allowed for examiners to be paid 3s. per script, with additional payments for chief examiners. Allowance has been made for possible loan charges in some cases. It has been assumed that the cost of printing a prospectus and regulations would be met by selling the prospectus at a price which would cover expenses, and that publicity would be unnecessary.

TABLE A. *Estimated income and expenditure on the basis of 5,000 candidates*

EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
<i>Examination</i>	£	<i>Fees</i>	£
Fees to examiners	6,750	Fees for candidates	
Fees to chief examiners . . .	1,250	(5,000 @ 15s.) . . .	3,750
Other expenses of examiners . . .	750		
Materials . . .	2,000	Fees for subject entries	
	10,750	(22,500 @ 10s.) . . .	11,250

*Administration**Grants*

Salaries, etc.	6,000		5,000
Other expenses (rent, rates, stationery, postage, tele- phone, cleaning, etc.)	3,250		
	<hr/> 9,250		
	<hr/> 20,000		<hr/> 20,000

TABLE B. *Estimated income and expenditure on the basis of 10,000 candidates*

EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
<i>Examination</i>	£	<i>Fees</i>	£
Fees to examiners	13,500	Fees for candidates (10,000 @ 15s.)	7,500
Fees to chief ex- aminers	1,500		
Other expenses of examiners	1,000		
Materials	3,500	Fees for subject entries (45,000 @ 10s.)	22,500
	<hr/> 19,500		
<i>Administration</i>			
Salaries, etc.	7,000		
Other expenses (rent, rates, stationery, postage, tele- phone, cleaning, etc.)	3,500		
	<hr/> 10,500		
	<hr/> 30,000		<hr/> 30,000

*National cost*

4. It will be seen that while Bodies are still running to low capacity, deficits must be expected, and it is assumed that these would be met from central funds. It is also assumed that fees for candidates from maintained schools will be met by local education authorities. The national cost may be roughly estimated as follows:

(a) *initially*, assuming that 14 regional Examining Bodies are required (of which, say, 6 are joint bodies covering two areas) and most of these are running below full capacity,

*fees paid by L.E.A.s (14 x £15,000) .....	£210,000
grants to meet deficits (14 x £5,000) .....	70,000
loan charges or capital grants, say, .....	50,000
research and central administration, say, .....	40,000
	<hr/>
	£370,000
	<hr/>

(b) *at a later stage*, when the full number of 20 Bodies are in operation, and most Bodies are working at maximum capacity,

*fees paid by L.E.A.s (20 x £30,000) .....	£600,000
grants of various kinds, say, .....	50,000
research and central administration, say, .....	40,000
	<hr/>
	£690,000
	<hr/>

5. Against these amounts must be offset, at both stages, amounts which local education authorities might in any case expect to disburse in fees in respect of 16 year old pupils taking examinations of existing non-G.C.E. Bodies. This might at a very rough estimate be put at £40,000 at the earlier stage, rising to £100,000 at the later stage.

6. The net additional burden on public funds would thus appear to be very roughly of the order of £330,000 initially, rising to £590,000 in the later stages.

---

\* No allowance has been made in these figures for fees paid on account of entries from independent schools.

## Glossary of educational terms used in the Report

### *Bilateral school*

A secondary school providing, in two clearly defined sides, different courses for children of differing grades of intelligence. Children can, however, be transferred within the school from one course to another.

### *Comprehensive school*

A secondary school intended to cater for the secondary education of all pupils over eleven in a given area, organised as a unified whole and not in clearly defined grammar, modern and technical sides. Its courses are directed to the needs of the full range of abilities of pupils between the ages of 11 and 19.

### *Compulsory school age*

The period for which a pupil is bound to receive full-time education. It ends on the last day of the term in which the pupil reaches his fifteenth birthday.

### *Consultative Committee*

The statutory body appointed under the Act of 1899 to advise the Board of Education on educational matters referred to it. Its place was taken under the 1944 Act by the Central Advisory Councils for England and Wales.

### *Crowther Report*

The Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), under the Chairmanship of Sir Geoffrey Crowther, on "The Education of Boys and Girls between the Ages of 15 and 18" published in 1959.

### *Extended course*

Any extended course in this report refers to a five year course in a secondary modern school or to a similar course in a comprehensive secondary school.

### *External examination*

An examination in which the syllabuses, question papers and marks are under the control of some body outside the school attended by the candidates.

### *Further education*

Vocational and non-vocational education provided for young people who are over statutory leaving age, and for adults. Many of the students are between 15 and 19.

### *Grammar school*

A type of secondary school providing an academic course from 11 to 16 or 18 almost always in preparation for the G.C.E. examination.

### *Group examination*

An examination in which candidates are required to take a given number of subjects of which some are compulsory and others are selected in a set proportion from prescribed groups of subjects. All of the required subjects must be taken at one and the same time.

### *Internal examination*

An examination in which the syllabuses, question papers and marks are entirely under the control of teachers in the school and which results in the award of certificates of achievement with some external currency. An examination otherwise internal may sometimes be subject to some kind of external assessment. Routine examinations conducted by schools for their internal administration are excluded from the definition for the purposes of this Report.

### *Local education authority (L.E.A.)*

A County Council or County Borough Council responsible for providing and administering all stages of education in its area. There are 129 local education authorities in England and 17 in Wales. The local education authority exercises its functions through an Education Committee.

### *Local examination*

In this Report, this term is used to denote an examination for secondary schools conducted by a local authority, a divisional executive or a group of schools which is current only within the area of a single local education authority.

### *Maintained school*

A school maintained by a local education authority out of public funds.

### *Modern school*

A maintained secondary school providing education for those children not selected at 11 years of age for grammar or technical schools. The percentage of such selected children varies from area to area and in consequence the range of ability and the courses found in modern schools also vary. An increasing number offer extended courses, some based on vocational interests, and others leading to external examinations, including the G.C.E. at Ordinary level.

### *Non-selective*

See "Selective".

### *Norwood Report*

Report of the Committee of the Secondary School Examinations Council under the Chairmanship of Sir Cyril Norwood on "Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools" published in 1943.

### *Selective school, stream or course*

A grammar or secondary technical school, stream or course, to which admission is confined to pupils whose performance, as measured by the local education authority's selection procedure, indicates ability to benefit from a more academic kind of education.

### *Specialist examination*

An examination taken by secondary school pupils in a limited range of subjects or for a limited purpose.

### *Spens Report*

Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education under the Chairmanship of Mr. (later Sir) Will Spens, published in 1938.

### *Statutory leaving age*

The age when a pupil ceases to be of compulsory school age.

### *Streaming*

The division of the pupils in any year into forms based on their ability and aptitude.

### *Subject examination*

An examination in which a candidate may be examined in one or more subjects of his choice.

### *Technical school*

A selective secondary school, providing an integrated academic and technical course from 11 to 16 or 18, with a vocational flavour.

### *User of examination*

A person who makes use of examination results for selection purposes. The term includes employers and principals of technical colleges.



SECONDARY SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS  
OTHER THAN THE G.C.E.

CORRIGENDUM

Page 66, Appendix IX, sub-paragraph (iv), line 1  
*for* "should be conterminous"  
*read* "should not be co-terminous"

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
*September, 1960.*

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